ANECDOTES

OF A

CONVENT.

By the AUTHOR of

MEMOIRS of Mrs. WILLIAMS.

In THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON,
Printed for T. BECKET and P. A. DE HONDT,
in the Strand.

M. DCC. LXXI.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

LETTERS

BETWEEN

The Right Hon. Lady LUCY SCOTT
and the Hon. Miſs BOLTON.

The Right Hon. Lady LUCY SCOTT
to the Hon. Miſs BOLTON.

I Received the packet by Parſon *Jones*, my dear, the day after your letter; a thouſand thanks for the trouble you have had in writing it over for my peruſal. So then, it was Mr. *Merton* that *George Boothby* fought, and killed! How unfortunate! Poor *Louiſa*, my heart bleeds for her; I have wept my eyes out on reading her ſtory. She judged right

when ſhe ſaid, ſome paſſages of her hiſtory were of ſo extraordinary a nature as would hardly be credited, unleſs by a friend, who was perfectly convinced of her veracity, and integrity of heart. It is, indeed, a very ſingular adventure, that of her lover's diſguiſe; but what is impoſſible to ſuperſtitious zeal in religion? If the convent walls could ſpeak, perhaps this ſtory might ceaſe to be extraordinary from the multiplicity of ſimilar ones which would then be revealed. Nothing but time, I apprehend, can alleviate the ſorrows of your friend; ſhe is young, and therefore may take a large doſe of this remedy; beſides, we ſooner forget the dead than the living. Though the latter be ever ſo far diſtant, or ſo long abſent, hope keeps the flame alive; but, as you have judiciouſly obſerved, deſpair

muſt

muſt in the end annihilate it, and, when love is no more, grief will vaniſh of itſelf.

I will tell you, *Julia*, that your friend's tragical ſtory, together with your own diſagreeable ſituation with *Harry Boothby*, have almoſt determined me, never to admit the little tyrant to my breaſt: what havock has he not made in your two gentle boſoms! I will poſitively have nothing to do either with him, or his mother; the nymph indifference ſhall for the future, be my divinity; I will addreſs her in thoſe beautiful lines of Mrs. *Greville's*.

" I aſk no kind return in love,
" No tempting charm to pleaſe;
" Far from the heart ſuch gifts remove,
" That ſighs for peace and eaſe.

" Nor eaſe nor peace that heart can know,
" That like the needle true,
" Turns at the touch of joy, or woe,
" But turning, trembles too."

You will here naturally aſk me, *Julia*, what is become of Lord *Malcom*? To which I anſwer, He is (I believe) ſtill at his father's ſeat in the country: Have you ceaſed to love him, *Lucy*? you'll ſay. Why no, not abſolutely; but I never was diſtractedly in love either with his Lordſhip or any other man; which is lucky, as my mother tells me ſhe is of opinion that Lord *Kelſo* will never conſent to his ſon's marriage with me, becauſe of the different ſentiments of our two families on political points. Beſides, I find my own father would diſlike our alliance as much as Lord *Malcom*'s, upon the ſame account; ſo

ſo you ſee, *Julia*, we are not very likely to be united, at leaſt for ſome time. If we continue, indeed, in the ſame mind for thirty years to come, we may perhaps, arrive at that period when all obſtacles will be removed, and leave us at liberty to join our withered hands and grey pates together in holy wedlock. Such conſtancy would be truly exemplary, and ought to be ſung in a ballad at all corners of the ſtreets. I treat this ſubject, you ſee, my dear, rather ludicrouſly, but it does not pleaſe me for all that; and, between you and I, it is my firm opinion, that if I do not marry Lord *Malcom*, I ſhall lead apes in the other world. This is certain, that I will never be wife to a man whom I do not love; and if my heart tells the truth, it is too much attached

ever to be capable of making a ſecond choice.

I think I hear you ſay, "You are "both of you maſters of your per-"ſons and fortunes, and therefore "may certainly marry each other if "you pleaſe." True, but I am determined (as I have already ſaid) that that the ſmiles and bleſſings of our parents on both ſides, ſhall accompany us to the altar, or I will never go there. Thus you ſee, *Julia*, that I bid fair for dying an antiquated virgin; no matter, the thought does not pain me much. Lord *Tatton* and I intend paying you a viſit at the abbey ſhortly; how impatiently I long for the moment, which will give me to the arms of my friend, and to the acquaintance of the tender, intereſting *Louiſa*. My brother ſays, Lady *Jane Carr*, by your picture of her, is juſt

juſt the girl of his heart; I wiſh we may meet her at the abbey. My little *Kitty*, now Mrs. *Lewis*, writes often to me; ſhe is as happy as love, health, and affluence can make her: I have had a long epiſtle from Mr. *Hackit*, full of flames, darts, ſtorms, tempeſts, racks, tortures, and, in ſhort, every thing that's dreadful and terrifick. The word *love* is frequently introduced into this boiſterous company, but the *ſentiment* is no where to be found throughout the whole letter. This curious compoſition is the production and joint efforts of Sir *Jaſper*, his Lady, and ſon. I was peruſing this finiſhed piece of eloquence, when Lady *Lanſdown* came into my dreſſing room; ſhe ſaw me ſmile, and ſaid, "*Lucy*, if it is no "indiſcretion, I ſhould be glad to "know who that letter comes from,

" which ſeems to have afforded you " ſo much amuſement." My dear Madam, replied I, I have no ſecrets, you are therefore very welcome to read it; ſo ſaying, I preſented it to her; ſhe thanked me with her eyes, and began to read: I ſaw ſhe could not keep her countenance, when returning me the paper, ſhe ſaid, ſmiling, Indeed, my dear *Lucy*, I am ſorry to find my friend Mr. *Hackit* to be ſo great a fool; I really could not have believed it of him; but ſome folks, continued ſhe, talk well, though they cannot write; nay, I have really known people of very weak underſtandings make a tolerable figure in the epiſtolary ſtile; therefore, why may not people of ſenſe, by the ſame rule, write ill? I told her Ladyſhip, I did not think ſhe had drawn a fair conſequence, ſince it might be poſſible

ble for a weak mind to have a memory, and for that reaſon write tolerably, but that a perſon of ſenſe, I apprehended, could never write nonſenſe. She tapped my cheek, and replied, "I know, child, that Mr. "*Hackit* will never find an advocate "in you; and indeed," ſaid ſhe, "he is moſt ridiculouſly bombaſtical. "He was not always ſo; I remem-"ber him a modeſt, well-behaved "youth, his travels (I fear) have "been ill conducted, ſince he is ra-"ther hurt than improved by them. "Our obſervations on men and man-"ners ſhould be the criterion by "which we try our own actions, and "therefore, the more varied theſe ob-"jects are, the greater improvement "we may make in ourſelves. This "is the uſe of travelling, that by "reading the human heart in a larger

" book than we could find it wrote in
" at home, we may learn to ſhun
" thoſe vices, which we ſee always
" render their votaries contemptible;
" and, with very few exceptions, in
" the end, miſerable: And, on the
" other hand, to incite us to an emu-
" lation of thoſe virtues which ſo
" conſpicuouſly adorn the happy poſ-
" ſeſſors of them. But I am afraid
" that this mode of education is often
" diverted from its purpoſe, by the
" bad choice which parents (too fre-
" quently) make of the men who
" call themſelves governors to young
" Gentlemen; and who, if their man-
" ners were ſtrictly examined into,
" together with their intellects, would,
" I fear, by the careful obſerver, be
" judged incapable of conducting
" themſelves with propriety, and con-
" ſequently, totally unfit for the em-
" ployment

" ployment they ſo *unfeelingly* have " the aſſurance to undertake." Here the good ſoul ceaſed ſpeaking. I love my mother, *Julia*, almoſt to idolatry; her good-nature and univerſal benevolence touch my heart, and her good ſenſe charms my underſtanding; in ſhort, ſhe is the friend of my choice, and my confidant. If all mothers were like her, my dear, would there be ſo many ridiculous, not to ſay, vicious characters as we daily ſee among the young folks of our ſex? I ſhould think not. My reaſons for thinking ſo are too obvious to want any illuſtration. My father's behaviour to my brother is exactly the counterpart of that of my mother's to me; how happy are the children who poſſeſs ſuch worthy parents! and what monſters of ingratitude ſhould we be, were we capable of giving them one moment's

moment's pain? Heaven avert it! even in thought; and yet, my friend, I have a ſuſpicion which gives me great uneaſineſs; Lord *Tatton's* temper is open, honeſt, generous, and humane; but then he is wild, unthinking, and raſh; his paſſions in their growth, have rather outſtripped his reaſon: Premeditatedly he will never deviate from the paths of virtue; but then he has many unguarded *moments*, not to ſay *hours*, in which his paſſions take the lead, and reaſon is ſilenced by the force of ſenſation. Theſe, obſerve, my dear, are rather my mother's outlines of his character, than my own; to which, however, *my* judgement and obſervations oblige me to aſſent. Adieu, my *Julia*, may you be as happy as your real goodneſs of heart intitles you, prays your truly affectionate friend,

Tatton Lodge. LUCY SCOTT.

Miſs

Miſs BOLTON *to Lady* LUCY SCOTT.

DON'T flatter yourſelf, my dear; the nymph indifference will laugh at your prayer; nay more, if indifference could be angry, ſhe would certainly be ſo at your petition. You "aſk no kind return in love, no "tempting charm to pleaſe;" how modeſt this is in you, who poſſeſs in ſo ſuperior a degree the power of charming; and who can (you know it) inſpire the warmeſt tranſports of returning love in any breaſt you ſhould chooſe to attack; nay, you actually have raiſed that paſſion in the only heart you ever wiſhed to warm. What a farce then is this pompous reſignation of bleſſings which you ſo eminently poſſeſs? I am half angry at you, my dear; you have certainly

adopted

adopted the ſtile of *Ivy Caſtle*, and therefore I muſt beg leave to laugh at you. *You* lead apes! a probable ſtory, indeed! Don't tell it to any body but me, *Lucy*; for you won't gain credit, believe me: But come to *Farnaby Abbey*, and we will ſoon cure you of this tranſient taſte for indifference; *our* feeling hearts will communicate a part of their ſenſibility to *yours*; we ſhall all be gainers by this partition, ſince *Louiſa* and I have too much of what you ſeem to be in ſuch want of. However, the former is, I think, more at eaſe, or leſs miſerable, I believe I ſhould ſay, ſince ſhe unburthened her mind to me, though the narration of her misfortune at the time was almoſt too much for her. I have communicated her ſtory to Mr. and Mrs. *Boothby*, becauſe I hoped by ſo doing to relieve in ſome meaſure, their

their anxiety, which was greatly augmented by their ignorance of the cauſe from whence her ſorrow ſprang: I alſo thought it neceſſary to give them a thorough knowledge of the affair, that they might not (through inadvertency) renew their grief again, as they had already ſeveral times done; add to theſe conſiderations, that *Louiſa* had neither diſhonoured herſelf or family, in any one action of her life: A circumſtance which muſt give them the greateſt pleaſure, as I had long perceived their ſuſpicions of the contrary to have been an object of their fears. The removal of this apprehenſion I found was a great conſolation to them both; yet they lamented the ſeverity of their daughter's fate with tears, which were increaſed by the knowledge, that it was not in their power to relieve her ſorrows in the

firſt place, and in the next, by the reflection that their own ſon had been the author of them: This laſt thought, I could ſee, was a pang of the bitterest kind to their honeſt hearts. After I had told the heads of my friend's ſtory (for I made it as ſhort as I could) Mr. *Boothby* ſaid with a deep ſigh, "Raſh, inconſiderate boy! was "the evidence of a fooliſh girl, "who might be incited to give it "againſt her ſchool-fellow, either "through envy or malice, a ſufficient "proof of the fact? or, if it were "ſo, did the young Gentleman merit "death for being honourably in love "with his ſiſter? He ought to have "heard from his own mouth who, "and what he was, as well as the "nature of his pretenſions, before he "had fought him; or rather, he "ought not to have fought at all.

"Let

" Let the affair on examination have
" proved ever ſo bad, the murder of
" the man would never have repaired
" *Louiſa*'s honour; but, on the con-
" trary, could only ſerve to make the
" whole world acquainted with her
" ſhame." I am very unhappy in my
" children, ſaid the good man, wiping
" his eyes; you, *Julia*, have contri-
" buted your endeavours to give me
" pain, by oppoſing all my plans for
" your happineſs; but you will ſoon
" break my heart among you," ſaid
he, dropping a tear. I was ſenſibly
touched at ſeeing him thus affected;
and taking his hand, ſaid, I would
not diſturb your peace intentionally,
Sir, for the univerſe, nor all that it
contains, except my *Harry*, and him
I never can give up but with life; to
renounce him would be my death; and
ſelf-preſervation is, you know, Mr.

Boothby, the firſt law of nature. Next to my lover, your peace is dear to me; nor will I ever wound it on any other ſubject but that of my attachment to him. "This conſtancy, "my dear," replied he, "would be "truly admirable at your age, was "the object of it worthy of you; "but as he is by no means a ſuitable "match for a girl of your fortune, "it becomes a vice by degenerating "into obſtinacy; however, time and "my fixed reſolves ever to oppoſe "a union ſo very diſproportionate "will, I hope, in the end, con-"quer your ſteadineſs. In the mean "while, I am obliged to you, my "dear *Julia*, more than I can ex-"preſs, for your tender care and kind "aſſiduities to my poor child; and, "more particularly ſo, for the recital "which you have ſo generouſly made

"of

" of her ſorrows. Mrs. *Boothby* and " myſelf will ever preſerve the moſt " grateful ſenſe of the obligations we " owe to you on that head." You have no gratitude in you, replied I, peeviſhly, or you would not make me the moſt wretched of beings, whilſt all my deſires tend to the happineſs of you and yours; ſo ſaying, I flounced out of the room.

How cruelly am I ſituated, Lady *Lucy?* Obliged to oppoſe and afflict the man on earth to whom I am the moſt indebted, who is, and has been a tender parent to me; or to give up the idol of my heart, and by ſo doing conſecrate the reſt of my days to miſery: Nay, ſuppoſing I did ſo, the ſacrifice would not anſwer the end, as I am perſuaded Mr. *Boothby* could never enjoy eaſe whilſt *Harry* and I were wretched; for *his* ſake therefore,

as well as his *ſon*'s, I am bound to follow my own inclinations. In this point of view, even gratitude demands it for the *father*, whilſt love pleads the cauſe of the *ſon*. Affairs being thus amicably ſettled between me and my conſcience, I ſhall change the topick, by ſaying, that you alarm me about Lord *Tatton*; I ſhould be extremely ſorry that he could be capable of doing any thing which might leſſen the high eſteem I have ever had for him. He is the man of all others, who would have been the object of my choice, had not my heart known a prior engagement before I ſaw him; he is the very image of my *Lucy*; is it then extraordinary that I ſhould be ſtrongly prejudiced in his favour? Sure he has not flung a profane eye on your favourite little *Suſan!* Forgive this ſuſpicion, if unjuſt; but ſhe is very pretty,

pretty, and my Lord (where the heart is free) muſt, I imagine, be irreſiſtible. I therefore hope I am miſtaken, and that he has made no attack on that quarter; and the more ſo, as I know your fondneſs for the girl.

The obſtacles you ſeem to apprehend with regard to yourſelf and Lord *Malcom* give me infinite concern; yet remember, my dear, that you told me in one of your letters, that "you "could wait willingly ten years for "the man you loved, ſo you was but "ſure of having him at that period." Now I really think (without being too ſanguine) you may be pretty certain, before the expiration of that time, all objections will be removed which at preſent impede your union; and then, who knows but you and I may be married on the ſame day. We ſhall probably be arrived at years of diſ-

cretion by that time; and may, for ought I know, make much better wives than if we had married younger. Our men too, I hope, will have reaped greater advantages from their experience and knowledge of the world; there will then be no danger of our changing our ſentiments with regard to each other, after having paſt ſo long a probation. In ſhort, upon the whole I think it is a prudent plan which fortune ſeems determined we ſhall follow, though ſore againſt our inclinations I am afraid. When you ſee your ſwain, don't forget, my dear, to enquire after my *Harry*; and give me all the particulars which you can learn about him. How much happier is your ſituation than mine! vaſt ſeas do not divide you from the object of your affections; you need not be ignorant of where he is, or how he does; no

no doubts diſtract your breaſt leſt he ſhould prove inconſtant, or that abſence ſhould weaken his paſſion for you: In ſhort, in your poſition I am perſuaded I ſhould not murmur, if I was even condemned to wait twenty years for his hand. Let me but talk to him, ſee him, and know that I poſſeſs his heart, I aſk no more; but to be deprived of all theſe bleſſings is to be wretched. Such is the hard fate of your ever faithful friend,

Farnaby Abbey. JULIA BOLTON.

Lady LUCY SCOTT *to Miſs* BOLTON.

JULIA, my ſuſpicions were but too well grounded, my brother has ruined *Suſan*. I cannot deſcribe the concern this cruel affair gives me; ſhe has lived with me ever ſince we were both children; *her* parents are tenants

to *mine*, and there cannot be worthier, honeſter people than they are. The other day whilſt ſhe was dreſſing me, I queſtioned her about her health, as I for ſome time perceived her to look pale and melancholy: I therefore inſiſted that ſhe ſhould have ſome advice. She anſwered, that ſhe was greatly obliged for my attention to her, but aſſured me ſhe was much better than ſhe had been, and ſhould do very well without a doctor. I however ſent for one, who, after being alone with her for ſome time, declared her diſorder to be a fever upon the ſpirits; and that air, exerciſe, and diſſipation, together with ſome medicines which he would order her, were neceſſary towards the reſtoration of her health. You know, my dear, that I have always treated this poor girl more like a friend than a ſervant; and on this

this occaſion I doubled my attention and tenderneſs towards her, and made her go out on airing every day in the poſt-chaiſe or chariot, often accompanying her myſelf; at which times I obſerved that ſhe took no pleaſure in the ride, and I could hear her ſigh frequently, as if her heart would break. I now began to ſuſpect that her dejection of ſpirits proceeded from a diſapprobation of her own conduct, and was therefore determined to get the ſecret out of her if poſſible, in order to apply a remedy to it, if in my power; and accordingly one morning, when we were in the chaiſe together, I ſaid, *Suſan*, what am I to think of the languid ſtate I ſee you in, and your obſtinate concealment of the cauſe which has flung you into it? a cauſe, which if you was not aſhamed to own, you would doubtleſs long

ago

ago have communicated to me, who you know to be your *friend*, as well as your *miſtreſs*. You muſt be certain, *Suſan*, that if your happineſs depended upon me, you would now have nothing left to wiſh. If you have fixed your affections upon ſome young man, whoſe narrow circumſtances prudence will not permit you to marry, make me your confidant, and that obſtacle ſhall ſoon be removed: Nay, if you are already married, and you fear my diſapprobation of your choice, declare it, and I will endeavour to make you happy in your own way, however little your conduct in the affair may merit my ſanction. Finding ſhe made no reply to all theſe interrogations, but continued weeping bitterly, with her eyes caſt down, I went on: Yet more, *Suſan*, ſhould it be worſe than all I have ſuppoſed; ſhould

ſhould you even have ſwerved from the path of virtue, tell me ſo; and in that caſe alone, though I cannot give you peace, yet I will aſſiſt you to hide your ſhame to the utmoſt of my power. As I pronounced theſe laſt words, I fixed my eyes full upon the poor girl's face, I ſaw her trembling all over, and as pale as death, when ſhe inſtantly fainted away in my arms. I called out for the chaiſe to ſtop, and applied *eau de luce* to her noſe; ſhe revived, and I ordered the poſtilion to drive ſlowly home: And now the poor creature, with a look which pierced my heart, (in it were blended ſhame, repentance, gratitude, and affection) took my hand, and reſpectfully putting it to her lips, and at the ſame time bathing it with her tears, ſhe ſobbing ſaid, "Your exceſs "of goodneſs, Madam, overcomes "me.

" me. I am, alas! moſt unworthy
" of it—but though I am fallen from
" virtue—yet I can never ceaſe to
" venerate and admire it in others.
" Indeed, Madam, continued the
" poor afflicted girl, I am a monſter
" in my own eyes, and am ſenſible
" I don't deſerve that you ſhould con-
" deſcend to take the leaſt notice of
" me; 'tis conſcious guilt which de-
" ſtroys me, and your goodneſs in-
" ſtead of leſſening, increaſes my ſen-
" ſibility of it: Therefore, pray, my
" dear Lady, do ſend me from you
" —indeed, indeed, I am not worthy
" to be admitted into your preſence—
" I have often been deſirous of tell-
" ing your Ladyſhip ſo, but ſhame
" has hitherto tied my tongue."
What have you then done, my poor *Sufan?* ſaid I, the tears falling from my eyes. " Alas! Madam," ſhe re-

plied

plied (hiding her face with a handkerchief) "I have given way to the too "great ſenſibility of my own heart, "and have liſtened to the ſeducing "language of the moſt amiable of "his ſex, till I loſt every ſenſe of "honour and conſcience, and fell a "willing victim to vice; I ſay, a wil-"ling one, becauſe my weak heart "(which had long felt the power of "his charms) betrayed me more than "either his intreaties or perſuaſions "could ever have done; but do not "think, Lady *Lucy*, that I am hard-"ened in wickedneſs: No, thank "God, the delirium of my ſenſes "laſted not long; and when I awaked "from it, my reſolution was fixed "never to repeat the crime again. "'Tis this reſolution (which I have "moſt ſteadily adhered to), together "with my repentance of the act,

"which

" which have reduced me to the ſtate
" which your Ladyſhip now ſees me
" in. I feel, however, ſome relief
" from this confeſſion of my guilt,
" as I am conſcious, Lady *Lucy*, that
" you ought not to keep in your
" ſervice, much leſs about your per-
" ſon, ſuch a wretch as I am; and for
" that reaſon I have long wiſhed to
" reveal my ſhame, that you might
" uſe me as I deſerve, by diſcarding
" me from the houſe and family.
" Beſides, my dear young Lady, it
" is abſolutely neceſſary that I ſhould
" leave *Tatton Lodge* immediately.
" My God!" exclaimed the almoſt frantic girl, raiſing her hands and eyes to Heaven, " ſhall I ever ſurvive
" that moment? Be compoſed, my
" dear *Suſan*," ſaid I, looking compaſſionately on her, " you may yet be
" ſaved from ruin if you will liſten

" to

" to me; I ſhall not pretend either to
" exaggerate or expatiate on the enor-
" mity of the folly you have been
" guilty of; *it*, like other acts of
" the *ſame nature*, has brought its
" puniſhment along with it; I do not
" therefore mean to increaſe your grief
" by my upbraidings, but on the
" contrary, my intention is to alle-
" viate it, by my endeavours to re-
" ſtore you to virtue, which can only
" be done by leading you into the
" paths of honour again. Now,
" ſhould your ſtory be known, the
" ill-natured world would ſoon ſtop
" up the road, and render your en-
" trance into it impracticable for the
" reſt of your days. I therefore
" charge you to exert yourſelf, and
" not give way to this immoderate
" grief, which will certainly occaſion
" ſuſpicions in the minds of your fel-

" low-

" low-ſervants, no ways advantageous
" to your reputation. I think I per-
" ceive, *Suſan*, that your heart is not
" corrupted; and if ſo, this devia-
" tion from virtue, which you ſeem
" ſo ſeverely to repent of, may be a
" powerful means of attaching you to
" her ſervice for the future; and, in
" that caſe, I ſhall never withdraw
" my friendſhip and protection from
" you; and I hope your conduct will
" be ſuch as may juſtify the kindneſs
" I ſhew you; but take care, *Suſan*,
" not to diſappoint my hopes; for
" ſhould you ever ſwerve a ſecond
" time from the laws of diſcretion and
" decency, I will from that moment
" renounce all connexions with you
" for ever." Here the poor creature was almoſt ſuffocated with the various emotions which my diſcourſe had occaſioned in her mind; ſhe felt too

much to ſpeak articulately; I could only diſtinguiſh a few words, ſuch as thanks, prayers, bleſſings, which were the effuſions of a grateful heart. I did not aſk her if my brother was her ſeducer, becauſe, though I was almoſt ſure it was him, yet, if I am miſtaken, I ſhould have been ſorry to have acquainted her that I ſuſpected him; I therefore reſolved to learn the truth from his own mouth. This affair, *Julia*, vexes me to the heart, for two reaſons; the firſt, becauſe I am ſorry for the girl, and the next, becauſe I cannot bear to think my brother in the wrong; I love them both, and therefore their errors give me infinite pain. I muſt aſk your advice how to place this unhappy creature, ſo as to ſecure her from all future danger on the part of the man who has ruined her. I would beg *you*, to take her, my dear,

but then if it is as I ſuſpect, Lord *Tatton* is frequently at Mr. *Boothby*'s, and I would have the girl never ſee him more for her own peace; the ſight of him would only renew her grief and remorſe; or which is ſtill ten times worſe, perhaps awaken in her breaſt that paſſion which I hope by time, abſence, and a juſt ſenſe of her folly, ſhe will be able to ſubdue.

I will, I think, write to Mrs. *Lewis*, and tell her, that if convenient, I intend myſelf the pleaſure of making her a viſit at the farm for a fortnight: I can then, on ſome pretence or other, leave *Suſan* there for a time. *Kitty*, I know, will do any thing to oblige me; and my mother will make no further enquiries on my return without her, when I inform her that the air agreed well with the girl, and therefore I left her behind me for a few

months

months with my friend, till her health was re-eſtabliſhed. If you approve of this ſcheme, I will immediately put it into execution.

When I came home laſt night from a viſit I had been making in the neighbourhood, I went ſtrait up ſtairs into my dreſſing-room, and ſat down to ruminate on the plan I had formed to reſcue poor *Suſan* from obloquy; when, who ſhould interrupt my cogitations but the very man I was thinking of, Lord *Tatton*. On entering the room, and ſeeing me in a thoughtful poſture, he ſaid, "My dear *Lucy*, you look "grave, are you ill, or has any thing "vexed you?" Indeed, brother, I replied, I am made very unhappy by the ill ſtate of health I ſee my poor *Suſan* in: He looked very ſerious, and anſwered, I have myſelf obſerved an alteration in the girl lately, which

has given me great uneaſineſs; and I wiſh, added he (ſighing) it was in my power to relieve her. No, no, brother, ſaid I, it is now no longer ſo, unleſs you could reſtore what I much fear you have robbed her of, I mean her innocence, and conſequently her peace. He ſtarted, and replied, You ſurpriſe me ſiſter, by this abrupt accuſation; but I am no hypocrite, nor am I a hardened libertine; the ſorrows of that poor girl pierce my ſoul, and I would give my right hand to be able to recal a few paſt moments; but as that is impoſſible, I can only ſay, that I am ready to make her all the reparation in my power: Any ſum, Lady *Lucy*, that you ſhall think reaſonable, I will ſettle upon her, or give it her entirely in the manner you ſhall dictate. I know, *Lucy*, ſaid he, that unblemiſhed virtue, like that you

poſſeſs, never preys on the weakneſſes of your own ſex, but rather extends a willing hand to ſupport and reinſtate a fallen ſiſter into the paths of honour, from whence ſhe has unfortunately ſtrayed. I have frequently obſerved, that it is only thoſe females who are conſcious that they have tripped themſelves, who wiſh to bring all the ſex down to their own level, and for that purpoſe, ſhut their hearts to the tender pleadings of pity, and compaſſion for human frailties. You preach well, brother, ſaid I, and give excellent leſſons to the Ladies; may not I, in return, be permitted to moralize on the conduct of the men? He ſmiling anſwered, Yes, *Lucy*, but take notice that I don't pretend to vindicate my conduct in this affair: I know it will admit of no excuſe, or at leaſt not of any which I can urge as a palliative to

you, without running a riſque of wounding your delicacy; I muſt therefore fling myſelf upon your mercy, and plead guilty. Let me however, recommend the fair ſufferer to your protection; ſhe is infinitely to be pitied, upon my ſoul, my heart bleeds for her. Here he turned from me to hide a falling tear; when recovering himſelf, he ſaid, She is, *Lucy*, (however ſtrange it may ſound to your chaſte ear) *virtuous*; the ſteady reſiſtance ſhe has made to all my intreaties for a renewal of our intimacy, tho' I know ſhe loves me to idolatry, is a proof of my aſſertion; her heart is without a blemiſh, nor will ſhe (I'll be her bond) ever ſuffer her paſſions to ſilence her reaſon a ſecond time. But I know you, *Lucy*, (ſaid this coaxing lad) and therefore why need I plead thus to that gentle heart of yours, which

which is ever ready to ſooth and ſuccour merit in diſtreſs. "I have now "only to beg, that you will command "my purſe and ſervices in any ſcheme "you may project in order to procure "to this poor girl peace and comfort." Then kiſſing my hand, he ſaid, Don't deſpiſe me, ſiſter; I am a true penitent, faith I am; and this affair will teach me never to repeat an act, which muſt inevitably be followed by ſhame, contrition, and remorſe. I told him, that I ſincerely rejoiced to find him ſo ſenſibly touched at his own wickedneſs, which I looked upon as a ſecurity for his future good behaviour. It was not neceſſary to tell him, I ſhould take every poſſible care of *Suſan*; he knew it too well to doubt it: I ſhall not however, communicate my intention of placing her at the Farm; yet it will be time enough to

do that a few hours before I ſet off. Adieu my deareſt *Julia*, I am tired with writing. Yours affectionately,

Tatton Lodge. LUCY SCOTT.

Miſs BOLTON *to Lady* LUCY SCOTT.

HOW amiable is your conduct, my dear Lady *Lucy*, with regard to poor *Suſan!* Many a girl in her ſituation has been loſt for want of ſuch a friend; a moment is ſufficient to ruin the *perſon* of a girl, but it requires a length of time to corrupt a *mind* that has been virtuouſly educated. How cruel therefore muſt the caſe of thoſe unhappy females be, who, from a momentary ſeduction of the ſenſes, find themſelves at once abandoned by the women, and treated with the moſt mortifying familiarity by the men, without a poſſibility of ever regaining the

the road to virtue! which is barred againſt them by the turpitude (allow me the expreſſion) of their own ſex, who fooliſhly imagine, that they heighten their own characters in the ſame degree, as they tear to pieces, and depreciate, thoſe of others; and that a violent zeal in the perſecution of theſe unhappy fair ones, is a poſitive proof of their own immaculate purity. Thus loſt to the ſociety they had been uſed to, *vice* opens her arms to receive them; they ſhudder at her approach, but having no alternative, follow her: Time and bad company render *her* familiar, till in the end they become the diſgrace of *our* ſex, as well as the reproach of the *other*. How many of theſe unfortunate wretches might be ſaved, did all women think and act like you, *Lucy*? In my opinion, you can place *Suſan*

no where better than with Mrs. *Lewis*. I need not tell you how ready I ſhould be to receive her here; but then I muſt give up the pleaſure of ſeeing Lord *Tatton* this ſummer; as I agree with you, that it is abſolutely neceſſary ſhe ſhould be removed from his ſight till ſhe recovers her health and reaſon again. How truly pitiable is her condition? What conflicting paſſions muſt tear her boſom? Love, ſhame, and remorſe, are doubtleſs the cruel inmates of her breaſt: Poor girl! with ſuch companions, how can ſhe know peace? "for peace, O virtue! peace "is all thy own." Lady *Jane Carr* arrived here a few days ago; ſhe is lovely beyond deſcription, and has, if I am not miſtaken, a good deal of the coquette in her compoſition, owing, I ſuppoſe, to her *Paris* education; yet every thing ſhe ſays and

does

does becomes her ſo well, that I am apt to think ſhe would loſe by any alterations being made either in her carriage or behaviour. She has an eaſy careleſs wildneſs about her that is enchanting. The meeting of her and *Louiſa* was pathetic to a degree which moved us all; they flew into each others arms with tranſports. *Louiſa* wept aloud, whilſt Lady *Jane* looked at her friend with the moſt tender ſenſibility. We left them alone for upwards of an hour; on our return, I could perceive by Miſs *Boothby*'s eyes, that ſhe had been crying a good deal, but was then pretty tolerably compoſed. Yeſterday morning, as I was taking a ſolitary walk in the Park, thinking of my *Harry*, I heard ſomebody running after me; on turning my head to ſee who it was, I perceived Lady *Jane Carr*, without either

hat

hat or gloves, and almoſt out of breath, calling out, Miſs *Bolton*, ſtop! I did ſo, till ſhe came up to me; when taking hold of my arm, ſhe ſaid, I have a ſecret to tell you, my dear: "You ſober, diſcreet young women "are much fitter to be truſted with "one, than us giddy-headed girls are: "But to be ſerious: You are the "friend of *Louiſa* as well as myſelf, "Miſs *Bolton*, and I find you know "her ſtory; but I know more than "either of you do, which is, that "young *Merton* is not dead; nay, "that he is even pretty well recovered "of his wounds, and is gone to the "South of *France* with his parents, "for the re-eſtabliſhment of his "health; and what's ſtill more than "all this, ſaid ſhe, putting her hand "into her pocket, here's a letter from "him to *Louiſa*; when preſenting it

"to

" to me, Take it, ſaid ſhe, I durſt not
" mention a word of all this to our
" friend, for fear of killing her with
" joy; but you, Madam, will, I am
" perſuaded, communicate the pleaſing
" news to her in a proper manner; and
" therefore I have prudently given this
" commiſſion into abler hands than my
" own." I was, as you may ſuppoſe, my dear, moſt agreeably ſurpriſed at what this ſprightly girl had told me; and aſked her how ſhe came not to produce this letter ſooner? She replied, " Becauſe it was a ſerious af-
" fair, and I am ſo little uſed to things
" of that nature, that I was puzzled
" how to act: I wanted firſt to learn
" who knew *Louiſa*'s ſtory; as, if I
" found ſhe had concealed it from
" one in the family, I muſt neceſſarily
" have given her the information and
" letter myſelf; but, if on the con-

trary,

" trary, either you, or her parents,
" were made acquainted with her hiſ-
" tory, I thought the diſcovery would
" come better from any of you, than
" from me At laſt ſhe told me that
" you was her confidant, when I in-
" ſtantly determined to requeſt you to
" break the affair to her, as I was cer-
" tain you would do it with much
" more addreſs and propriety than I
" could, though with the beſt inten-
" tions in the world." I commended her prudence, and told her, ſmiling, that I would charge myſelf with the commiſſion, as ſhe requeſted it; but that, I really thought ſhe was as capable to the full of executing it as I; and had only given it me to ſave herſelf the trouble. That's not the caſe, replied ſhe; there is no trouble I would not chearfully undertake to ſerve *Louiſa Boothby*. I then aſked her

ſeveral

ſeveral queſtions about Mr. *Merton*; ſhe told me, he was a moſt amiable young Gentleman, both in mind and figure; but that his having been educated ſo many years as a girl, had given him an effeminate carriage, which, ſhe ſuppoſed, time might wear off. He is continually placing his hands acroſs before him, ſaid ſhe; and has a ſoftneſs, and a ſort of reſtraint in his manner, that is not manly; then he walks with his knees too cloſe together; in ſhort, I don't know how to deſcribe him to you; but altogether, there is an aukwardneſs about him which makes me laugh. I then enquired how ſhe came by the letter. He ſent it incloſed to me, ſhe replied; for I had told him I was going to *England* ſoon, when I met him at the *Pruſſian* ambaſſador's, which was the firſt time, he ſaid, that he had been

out

out a viſiting ſince his illneſs. "I "found that he left *Paris* not long "after this interview; and I fancy he "muſt have been pretty narrowly "watched, or he would certainly "have contrived to have wrote to "*Louiſa* long before now." Nay, probably, continued ſhe, he has wrote letters which have been intercepted by his mother; for by what he ſaid to me (the only time I ſaw him out of the convent) I could perceive his paſſion for my friend to be as violent as ever. "He ſwore then, that no hu-"man power ſhould prevent his mar-"rying of her." Lady *Jane* and I now returned home to breakfaſt. The pleaſing news I had juſt heard flung an unuſual vivacity into my eyes, which *Louiſa* taking notice of, ſaid, I ſee, *Julia*, that my ſprightly friend has raiſed your ſpirits this morning, which

which I am ſincerely glad of. I anſwered, that I had indeed, been much entertained during our ſhort walk in Lady *Jane*'s company; adding, that a little exerciſe might perhaps have the ſame effect upon her; I therefore intreated her to take my arm, and walk a turn or two in the garden. Lady *Jane* took the hint, and went to play on the the harpſichord. As ſoon as we were alone, I began to talk of Mr. *Merton*; ſhe ſeemed ſurpriſed, as it was a ſubject I had hitherto carefully avoided; and looking at me, ſaid, How comes it, my dear *Julia*, that you mention with ſo much apparent eaſe the name of that unfortunate youth? Becauſe, I replied, I have a great notion that he is not dead. Not dead! exclaimed ſhe, my God! what can make you think ſo? Nay, ſaid I, I know nothing certain about the matter; but Lady

Lucy Scott writes me, that in company ſhe heard ſomebody ſay they had heard Sir *Francis* and Lady *Merton* were gone to the South of *France* with their only ſon, who had been ſuppoſed to be mortally wounded in a duel, and was ſtill in a very weak ſtate of health. Here I pauſed; ſhe was, I perceived, loſt in thought; when raiſing her ſtreaming eyes on me, ſhe uttered a deep ſigh, ſaying, Gracious Heaven! does he indeed ſtill live! but no, he was (you tell me) in a very weak ſtate of health, and may, for ought I know, be dead *again* by this time. This expreſſion made me ſmile; when taking me in her arms ſhe cried, Ah! *Julia*, you know more than you tell me about Mr. *Merton*; for pity's ſake eaſe my throbbing breaſt, and tell me all. Indeed, my dear, I anſwered, I know no more, but have

wrote to Lady *Lucy* to make further enquiries after him; in the mean time, I think it is probable that he may recover, and it is a great comfort to know that he was not killed, as you ſuppoſed him to have been; is it not, *Loniſa?* It is, it is too much felicity! ſaid ſhe, burſting into tears: Let him but live, and I ſhall be happy, though I may never ſee him more. Here Mr. *Boothby*'s preſence interrupted our converſation. I took the firſt opportunity I could find to tell my guardian what had paſt between Lady *Jane*, his daughter, and I, that morning. He was laviſh in his praiſes of my diſcretion, as well as in the expreſſions of his gratitude for the tender care, as he expreſſed it, which I took of his daughter's health and peace. I wiſh to God, *Lucy*, that he would follow my example, by ſhewing as much

tender care of mine and *Harry*'s happineſs, as I do for his daughter's.

I ſhall leave *Louiſa* to ruminate on what I have told her for ſome time, before I dare venture to ſhew her the letter; as you may do, my dear, upon the ſingularity of her fate; young as ſhe is, to have experienced ſo many viciſſitudes in life. Adieu, my ever dear friend, I wiſh you a good journey, and great pleaſure at *Lewis Farm*, though I grudge them your company, as it was promiſed to me. Don't ſtay long, and believe me ever faithfully yours,

Farnaby Abbey. J. Bolton.

Lady Lucy Scott *to Miſs* Bolton.

I Arrived here ſome days ago, my dear, but could not find time to write till now; poor *Suſan* I thought would

would have died upon the road. My brother, who has conſtantly avoided her ever ſince my diſcovery of the affair, took care to go from home the night before my departure from the Lodge, in order not to hand me into the chaiſe, or rather, not to ſee *Suſan* go off. She kept up her ſpirits pretty well till we loſt ſight of the houſe, when her grief was immoderate; I ſcolded, ſoothed, and tried every means I could think of to abate her ſorrow; at laſt ſhe became more calm, and expreſſed a real ſatisfaction at being removed from the man who had been the murderer of her peace. By the bye, *Julia*, I ſuſpect that my mother's obſerving eye has penetrated our ſecret, and that, on ſeeing me act in the affair in a manner which met with her approbation, ſhe prudently concealed her knowledge of it.

On my taking leave of her, ſhe embraced me tenderly, ſaying, "Adieu, my dear girl, may providence "reward your benevolence, by procuring you friends (whoſe hearts "may be as generous and noble as "your own) on any emergency in "which you may want their aſſiſtance." I made no other anſwer than by preſſing her dear hand to my lips. My father ſaid, Good bye, *Lucy*, don't ſtay long from us, my dear child, 'tis a real ſorrow to your mother and I to part with you, though for ever ſo ſhort a time; but your motives for taking this journey are ſo truly amiable and meritorious, that we can ſay nothing againſt it. I took no notice of all theſe hints, but promiſing to return home ſoon, got into the poſt-chaiſe, into which I was handed by the beſt of fathers, and away we drove.

At

At night we arrived here: I felt a little fooliſh tenderneſs about my heart, *Julia*, on entering the inn where I had firſt ſeen Lord *Malcom*; it did me no eſſential harm however, for I never was more chearful than on meeting this amiable family. I found *Kitty* a little thicker in the waiſt, than when I ſaw her laſt; but ſhe looks vaſtly well, and is much improved in her carriage. The unaffected joy which theſe good people expreſſed on ſeeing me, gave me infinite pleaſure. I enquired after the family at *Ivy Caſtle*; young *Lewis* anſwered, laughing, They are at preſent, Madam, all in an uproar; "but, dear Lady *Lucy*, a "truce with your curioſity till to-"morrow, when you ſhall know the "hiſtory; but, for to-night, ſuffer us "to talk of nothing but the pleaſure "we feel on ſeeing you at *Lewis*

" *Farm.*" *Kitty* never took her eyes off me all the evening, and kept my hand continually in hers: The old folks expreſſed the joy my preſence gave them, in every word and action. How innate worth embelliſhes the human form, *Julia*, whilſt her opponent vice, disfigures it in the ſame proportion? Theſe good folks have ſomething divine about them, proceeding from the rectitude of their hearts, and increaſe of their manners. There is an honeſt ſimplicity in them, which attracts and charms; and which is as far from ruſticity, as it is from courtly affectation; in ſhort, 'tis the language of hearts well educated, whoſe purity needs no diſguiſe. I wiſh, as you ſay, that any body would conſole us. We are two forlorn damſels croſſed in love, and yet no creature ſeems to care a farthing about it.

Indeed, my inclination is a ſecret, and ſhall be ſo till I return to *London*; and then, if my ſwain continues in the ſame mind, I ſhall openly declare it. My mother, it is true, knows ſomething of the matter, but ſhe has not thought proper to mention a word of it either to my father or brother.—Here I was obliged to lay down my pen, I write ſuch long letters that they are the work of days.—Mr. *Charles Lewis* aſked me this morning (with an arch turn of his eye) how Lord *Malcom* did? I replied (without any heſitation) Upon my word I don't know; I have neither heard of him, or ſeen him, ſince we parted at *Ivy Caſtle*. If ſo, ſaid the ſly lad, then I know more of him than you do, Lady *Lucy*; for here is a letter (ſhewing it me) which I received from his Lordſhip yeſterday, wherein he tells me, that

that he will honour our cottage with his preſence in a few days. I bluſhed. "You will not object to his company, "I hope." Indeed, continued he, (with an affected careleſsneſs) I could not poſſibly foreſee that his Lordſhip would fulfil the obliging promiſe he had made us of a viſit, preciſely at the time your Ladyſhip was here. I could beat you, ſaid I, for thus trifling with me; for I ſee plainly this is all a concerted ſcheme. You, *Charles*, want to be revenged on me for giving you a wife, by procuring me a huſband. He laughed and replied, why faith, Madam, if Lord *Malcom* ſhould prove as good a huſband as my *Kate* does a wife, I think I cannot make you a more valuable preſent. But pray, ſaid I, how came you and Lord *Malcom* to correſpond? That honour, Madam, he anſwered, I owe to your Lady-

Ladyſhip: His Lordſhip knew there was intercourſe by letters between you and my wife, and therefore made uſe of me, in order to get intelligence about your Ladyſhip. "And ſo you "kindly let him know that I was "coming here, and invited him to "meet me?" Why, ſomething like it, I confeſs, ſaid he. I looked grave, and told him he had acted imprudently. My dear Lady *Lucy*, ſaid his father, do forgive my ſon in favour of the goodneſs of his intentions: Beſides, if you will permit me to ſay ſo, I really think my Lord *Malcom* deſerving of you; he is a mighty good young man, and loves you as you ought to be loved, with a paſſion as delicate as it is fervent. I changed the converſation by aſking what was the matter at Sir *Jaſper*'s? His anſwer I ſhall not tell you at preſent; it would make

make my letter too long. Inform me how Miſs *Boothby* received the intereſting intelligence which you kept in reſerve for her: I dread leſt ſhe ſhould die of joy.

Poor *Suſan* mends I think, change of ſcene has viſibly been of ſervice to her; young Mrs. *Lewis*'s attention to have her amuſed and taken care of is truly amiable. This little woman is notable in her family, and has taken all the care of it off her mother-in-law, who almoſt idolizes her; yet ſhe ſeems to have nothing to do, though ſhe directs the motions of every thing from the garret to the kitchen. The ſervants underſtand her looks; for which reaſon ſhe never diſturbs her company, either by finding fault with them, or by giving them her directions. The old folks have reſigned the houſe to the young *ones*, and there-

fore

fore call themſelves their gueſts; and the young couple behave to them as if they owed every thing they poſſeſs to their bounty. Again I repeat it, how lovely is virtue! what happineſs ſhe beſtows on her votaries! I could dwell for ever on this theme, but luckily for you I have not time at preſent; ſo adieu my ſweet girl, love your own

Lewis Farm. LUCY SCOTT.

P. S. I fancy I ſhall like Lady *Jane Carr* vaſtly; be ſure to make me known to her when we meet in *London.* I know Lord and Lady *Plumſtead* very well.

Miſs BOLTON *to Lady* LUCY SCOTT.

MY dear Lady *Lucy* will perhaps be ſurpriſed when I inform her that my Lord *Tatton* is with us at the Abbey; he arrived the day before I received your laſt letter. We were all (as you may ſuppoſe) delighted to ſee him: He told us that you was gone to *Lewis Farm*, and not knowing when you purpoſed coming back, he had determined not to be diſappointed of his intended viſit to us, and was therefore come alone. He had not been long here before I found his attention was fixt on the fine features of my friend *Louiſa*; when putting his mouth to my ear he whiſpered, "So, that "ſweet girl is in love too, I perceive; "and you, I ſuppoſe, are ſtill ſigh- "ing for your *Harry*; ſo that if the

"ſprightly

" ſprightly Lady *Jane* don't take com-
" paſſion on me, I ſhall inevitably be
" reduced to the ſtate of a confidant
" among you; for which office I really
" think myſelf rather too young." I laughed and told him, Lady *Jane* hoped I would take pity of his deplorable condition, and not ſuffer him to act a part ſo very ill calculated for his genius. He ſmiled, and quitting me, went and ſeated himſelf by Lady *Jane*; where I ſhall leave him for the preſent, and return to my friend *Louiſa*. She ſlept but little the night after our converſation in the garden; the next day ſhe and I talked of nothing but her lover. She now began to familiarize her mind to the idea of his being alive, and was conſequently no longer fluttered at the mention of his name. The day following I aſked her, that in caſe he ſhould write, whether ſhe could receive

receive a letter from him without ſuffering emotions which might endanger her health? I did not ſtay for her anſwer, but went on, "for I think it is "probable, that as ſoon as he is able, "he will find a way to let you hear "from him." She replied, I don't know, my dear, whether I might not die of joy at ſuch an unhoped for event. You would do well to prepare yourſelf for it, ſaid I, becauſe I have a ſort of * *preſcientiment* that you will hear from him ſhortly. "Why do you flatter "my fond wiſhes ſo much, my friend! "conſider that I am too weak to bear "a diſappointment." I aſſured her I had my reaſons for ſaying what I did; as I was morally ſure ſhe would either hear from, or of, Mr. *Merton* in a very few days. She embraced me, ſaying,

* Foreſight.

I was

I was her ſupport and comfort; that ſhe knew I was incapable of deceiving her; adding, how ſhall I ever ſhew my gratitude ſufficiently to you, for the joyful news you have juſt now told me? In the afternoon ſhe aſked me at leaſt fifty times over, when I thought it probable that I ſhould receive a letter from Lady *Lucy Scott?* (as ſhe conceives you, my dear, to be the ſource from whence I draw all my intelligence). I at laſt ventured to tell her, that if ſhe would muſter up all her courage, and promiſe to behave well, I would read to her a part of your letter which I had juſt received. With the utmoſt eagerneſs ſhe anſwered for the propriety of her behaviour: I therefore drew an old letter of yours out of my pocket, in which I pretended to read moſt of the circumſtances which Lady *Jane* had informed

me of relative to Mr. *Merton*; adding, that he had ſent a letter to Miſs *Boothby* by a friend who was going to *England*. I could perceive her eyes ſparkle with joy whilſt I read. As ſoon as I had done, ſhe caught my hand in a kind of rapture, ſaying, my dear *Julia*, I knew you was too good, too prudent, to give me hopes which were ill founded. Good God! cried ſhe, clapping her hands together, he lives then — loves me — and I ſhall hear from him! I made her no anſwer, but let her alone to digeſt what I had already given her; till obſerving her to be buried in thought, I rouſed her by ſaying, Come *Louiſa*, let us take a walk; I ſhall expect to be paid for my news by the chearfulneſs of your future behaviour; no more ſighs nor tears, or I have done with *you*, and your *affairs* for ever. God forbid! cried

cried the poor girl; but indeed, *Julia*, I cannot ſo ſoon forget how wretched I have been: My ſorrows were become habitual to me, and it will require ſome time before I can teach my heart to regain its former tranquillity. I have not yet been able to convince my ſenſes of the reality of thoſe truths which you have ſo obligingly communicated to me. "Have patience "with me, my dear friend; a little "time will, I hope, retune my facul- "ties to pleaſure, which are by a long "diſuſe, totally unſtrung and diſ- cordant." Make haſte then, ſaid I, to put them in order againſt this letter comes. We now went into the garden, where we found your brother and Lady *Jane* at high romps together, and the good old couple ſeated on a bench laughing at them. Theſe two wild things, *Lucy*, ſeem to be made for

each other. Lord *Tatton*, it ſeems had laid a *diſcretion* with Lady *Jane*, that he could leap over the Ha, Ha: She took the bet that he could not. He however did it, and claimed a kiſs: *She* inſiſted that kiſſing was indiſcreet, and therefore could never come under the denomination of a *diſcretion*. *He* declared that the victor had an undoubted right to chooſe his reward; adding, that ſhe was certainly the firſt perſon that ever ſuppoſed a kiſs to be an indiſcretion. In ſhort, he would be paid, and was; but he took it in ſo reſpectful a manner, that her Ladyſhip could not with juſtice have been angry with him. They are an inexhauſtible fund of amuſement to each other; they ſing, play, walk, ride, romp, and go a fiſhing together. Nay, they have drawn one another's pictures in caricatura. They are like however,

and from their extreme uglineſs, would make you laugh to think that two ſuch pretty people ſhould be repreſented like monſters, and yet bear ſome reſemblance of the originals; they are done with charcoal upon blue paper.

The next day, after having converſed for near an hour with *Louiſa* on the old ſubject, ſhe appeared to be in ſuch tolerable ſpirits, that after a ſhort preface I ventured to give her Mr. *Merton*'s letter. She ſeized it trembling; I conjured her to be calm. She appeared much agitated during the peruſal of it. I dreaded the event; when, on finiſhing the letter, ſhe burſt into a violent flood of tears. I was glad to ſee them flow, as they were (I could perceive) the expreſſions of her joy; then giving me the paper, ſhe ſaid, read it, *Julia*, whilſt I try to

compoſe myſelf. "Indeed, I think "pleaſure is as hard to bear as pain; "but I am a poor weak creature." So ſaying, ſhe turned pale, her voice faultered, and ſhe ſunk lifeleſs off her chair. I rung for help, and ſhe ſoon recovered, when ſhe begged my pardon for having alarmed me ſo much, for I believe I looked like death; promiſing upon her honour, that ſhe would exert herſelf for the future, and never frighten me in the ſame manner again. I thanked her for thoſe aſſurances, as I really have ſuffered a great deal on her account. I now read the letter which I here ſend you a copy of. My ſpirits are fatigued. Adieu, my dear *Lucy*, ever yours.

Farnaby Abbey. JULIA BOLTON.

Mr.

Mr. MERTON *to Miſs* BOOTHBY.

My lovely friend and miſtreſs, my ever dear *Louiſa*,

I Now ſteal the firſt moment in which I have had an opportunity of writing to you, ſince the fatal evening on which I ſaw you in the parlour of the convent, to inform you of what happened to me on quitting you. I went, as it was late, as faſt as I could, to join my ſervant and horſes; when I perceived a young gentleman ſtanding by them. I approached with ſome diffidence, as fearing I might be diſcovered by one of my father's acquaintance; when he, in an angry tone of voice, accompanied by a menacing air, aſked me, what buſineſs I had in that convent? Who I viſited there? and what was my name?

I replied, that as I conceived he had no authority to interrogate me in that inſolent ſtile, I ſhould beg leave to anſwer none of his queſtions, and was going to mount my horſe; when catching hold of me, he ſaid, You are a raſcal, Sir, or you would neither wiſh to ſecrete your name, or attempt to ſeduce a girl of family and faſhion, who was placed in that houſe (pointing to the nunnery) in order to be ſecured from the intrigues of ſuch adventurers as yourſelf. So ſaying, he drew his ſword, and bid me defend myſelf like a man. I drew; but you know, my dear girl, how little I had been uſed to handle a ſword, having never received above ſix leſſons from the fencing-maſter. He had therefore every advantage over me, and ſoon ran his ſword through my body. Seeing me fall, he inſtantly endeavoured

to raiſe me, ſaying, Imprudent young man, I am ſorry for your fate; but you attempted the honour of my ſiſter, and for that reaſon forced me to this act of violence. I heard no more, nor knew any thing that paſt, till I found myſelf in bed at my father's, and him weeping by the ſide of it. I offered to ſpeak, but he begged I would not, telling me my life was in imminent danger unleſs I kept myſelf as quiet as poſſible. I heard him in a low voice ſay, Fatal error! cruel deception! had my child been educated as he ought to have been, he probably might have killed the villain who has now killed him. I thought to myſelf, thank God I did not; I would not have robbed a brother of my *Louiſa*'s of life to have purchaſed my own; nay, had I but known who he was, I would have made him hear my ſtory,

and

and have declared my pretenſions to his ſiſter to be as honourable as herſelf was pure: But I took him at firſt to be a ſpy ſet to watch my motions by my mother, and afterwards for a madman. I now found that I had been at home ſeveral days ſince this *rencontre*, but the loſs of blood had deprived me of my ſenſes till that time. I was long, my dear *Louiſa*, in a ſuffering condition; the wound I had received was both deep and dangerous; the terrors I felt on your account impeded my cure. I feared the violence of your brother, and dreaded the conſequences of your grief, on hearing from him that he had killed me; for ſo he really thought he had; in ſhort, I was wretched at being ignorant of what was become of you. At laſt, after having made many fruitleſs enquiries about you, my father informed me

that you was gone to *England*. I begged leave to write to you, but was peremptorily refuſed. I continued to be ſo very ill for a long time, that I was never left alone a moment, conſequently could find no opportunity of writing; till growing a little better, I was leſs watched. I wrote a few lines to you, and gave them to the ſervant who had ſo often accompanied me to the convent on my viſits thither; he promiſed faithfully to put the letter into the poſt: Some time paſt, yet I received no anſwer from you. I wrote again, but ſtill heard nothing from you; from which circumſtances I conceived the fellow had betrayed me to my father; I therefore determined to charge our mutual friend, Lady *Jane Carr* with a letter for you, as I heard ſhe was ſhortly to return to *England*; when luckily I met her on a viſit,

viſit, the very firſt time I had made any ſince my illneſs. She promiſed to deliver it into your own hands, and informed me that you was very unhappy on my account; and that for her own part, ſhe had believed me dead. Though ſo long a time had elapſed ſince our ſeparation, and I had heard nothing of you, yet I never harboured a doubt of my *Louiſa*'s love or fidelity; no, my divine girl I am certain will never forget her faithful *Francis*; an attachment like ours can know no change. I am now ſetting off to the South of *France*, for the recovery of my health, as I am ſtill very weak: There I hope to find opportunities of writing to you; if not, I ſhall certainly return to *England* as ſoon as poſſible. In the mean while keep up your ſpirits, I conjure you, ſince I ſhall moſt indubitably recover if my *Louiſa* lives and

loves

loves me. I cannot give you any ſure direction how to write to me yet, as I am totally a ſtranger to the country I am going into; nor do I know the place we ſhall ſtop at, or for how long a time. I need not tell you how ardently I wiſh to hear from you, ſince you are my life, my exiſtence. *Louiſa*, I have not a proſpect in life but what is centered in your felicity. We ſhall be happy together, depend upon it; nay, we will, for no power on earth ſhall diſunite our hearts. My father's exceſs of fondneſs for me will engage him to be of our party againſt my mother. I ſhall put a ſcheme into execution on my arrival in *England* which will, I doubt not, render us completely happy in the poſſeſſion of each other. Adieu, my ever dear, ever valued friend. I am afraid of being ſurpriſed, or I could write to

you

you for ever. You live in my breaſt, and are always preſent to my imagination. My *Louiſa*, my life, how my heart pants for the moment, when claſping you to my faithful boſom, I ſhall vow myſelf for ever yours!

Paris. FRANCIS MERTON.

Lady LUCY SCOTT *to Miſs* BOLTON.

I Rejoice with you moſt ſincerely, my dear *Julia*, on the happineſs of your friend; pray God ſend that ſhe and her faithful *Merton* may meet with no further obſtacles to their wiſhes. The young Gentleman appears to me to be of a determined diſpoſition, and won't, I fancy, ſuffer ſmall difficulties to oppoſe his union with *Louiſa*. But yet I foreſee with concern, that they will labour under ſome inconveniencies with regard to obtaining Lady

Merton's

Merton's conſent to the match; and without that Mr. *Boothby* will never ſuffer his daughter to marry him. I hate croaking, and hope I may prove a falſe propheteſs, as I moſt ardently wiſh the mutual happineſs of *Louiſa* and her *Francis*. Your behaviour, my dear, throughout the whole affair, has been above all praiſe; how delicate, how tender! Affliction almoſt loſes her ſting in the arms of ſuch a friend as you have been to Miſs *Boothby*.

I am glad my brother is with you; he is a lively companion, and if he ſhould chooſe to make Lady *Jane Carr* my ſiſter, (from the deſcription you have given me of her) I ſhall have no ſort of objection to it: They have both good hearts, and if they like one another, will probably be happy. *Ned* is good humour perſonified, and will,

I dare

I dare ſay, make an excellent huſband; beſides, we want him married, to keep him quiet; ſo you can't do better, I think, *Julia*, than to make up the match; and in the mean time I muſt (with your permiſſion) tranſport you to *Ivy Caſtle*, where, as the ſaying is, the devil has danced for ſome time, occaſioned by the following ſtrange adventure.

A few days after I left Sir *Jaſper*'s, Mr. *Hackit* went to *York* races, where a numerous concourſe of beaux and belles were aſſembled as uſual. Among the latter Miſs *Homes* was the moſt conſpicuous both for beauty, ſplendor, and equipage; her perſon being ſtrikingly handſome, and her coach and horſes the fineſt on the courſe; or, I ſhould ſay, her father's, for he was with her, together with a young girl her companion. Mr. *Hackit* loſt his heart

heart at the firſt glance either of her perſon or fortune, I will not venture to aſcertain which. It was univerſally reported that Mr. *Homes* was a Gentleman of an immenſe eſtate in the *Weſt-Indies*; and was now come into the North to purchaſe ſome land there, with an intention to build on it, as his anceſtors came from that part of *England*. Mr. *Hackit* had the honour of dancing with his flame the firſt ball-night, and the next morning politely waited upon her to enquire after her health. Mr. *Homes* was ſo pleaſed with the young Gentleman's behaviour, that he invited him to dine with him that day, and took him in his coach to the field, and conſequently he danced with the Lady again that night; and ſo it went on during the whole time of the races; the young couple apparently delighted

with each other, and the old man perfectly charmed with Mr. *Hackit*, whose circumstances and expectances he was doubtless no stranger to, as the family is so well known by every individual in the county. When the public diversions were all over, Mr. *Hackit* did not leave *York*, as he was determined to pursue his mistress, and, if possible, obtain her for life. He believed her to be vastly rich, and he very well knew that he should never possess a shilling which he could properly call his own, whilst his father lived, unless he married and got a settlement.

Upon the occasion he therefore ventured to declare his honourable intentions to the Lady; who, after a proper time, with a modest reluctancy owned her partiality for him; but at the same time said with a sigh, that she durst not flatter him with the hopes of his

ever

ever obtaining her hand without her father's conſent, as ſhe knew very well he was determined never to marry her to any thing leſs than a Peer: Beſides, added ſhe, my fortune will (if he pleaſes) be ſo enormouſly large, that he won't think your eſtate at all adequate to it. Mr. *Hackit* at this period of her diſcourſe, flung himſelf at her feet in deſpair, ſaid all the fine things which he is ſo capable of ſaying; and was, in ſhort, ſo melting, ſo moving, that the Lady drowned in tears, told him ſhe could no longer reſiſt his ſorrow, and would let him into the real ſtate of her affairs, and then be entirely guided by his advice. "I have, ſaid Miſs *Homes*, ſobbing, "a ſmall fortune of my own, which "was my mother's, and my father is "obliged to pay it me on my marri-"age:" It is only thirty thouſand

 pounds,

pounds, which is a mere trifle, when put in compariſon with what he may leave me at his death, though I make no doubt but he will diſinherit me if I marry without his conſent, which I muſt do if I marry you, Mr. *Hackit*, ſaid ſhe (ſtill weeping); and I can never be brought to give my hand to any other man, ſince you alone poſſeſs my heart. Fortune is no conſideration with me in the choice I have made of a huſband; for I honeſtly declare, I would prefer you with the bare neceſſaries of life, to ſplendor, without you. Here ſhe ceaſed ſpeaking, and Mr. *Hackit* (I ſuppoſe) rummaged his memory for all the ſcraps of old plays he could poſſibly recollect, which might expreſs the violence of his paſſion to the beſt advantage. Be that as it may, his bombaſt wrought ſo efficaciouſly on the Lady, that ſhe agreed to a clandeſtine

deſtine marriage, or, in other words, to go off to *Scotland* with him; ſtipulating however, that he ſhould firſt obtain the conſent of Sir *Jaſper* and his Lady, without which ſhe would never be his; as her delicacy and ſenſe of honour could never ſubmit to enter into a family where ſhe ſhould not be received with pleaſure. He promiſed to write immediately to his parents on the ſubject, and was going to take his leave of her for that purpoſe, when ſhe ſtopped him, ſaying, Old people, Mr. *Hackit*, are generally fond of money; and therefore I will mention a circumſtance to you, which, though it will appear to be of very little importance (I am perſuaded) to a man of your generous principles, yet may have its weight with your relations: It is this; that the jewels you have ſeen me wear, are my own; they were left

me by mother, and have been, as I am informed, valued at ten thouſand pounds. Now I ſhall certainly take care not to leave them behind me when I go to *Scotland*, at leaſt, not in my father's poſſeſſion. You ſee, Mr. *Hackit*, continued Miſs *Homes*, the unlimited confidence I place in you, ſince I put my perſon and fortune into your hands at diſcretion, truſting entirely to your honour, that you will make a proviſion for me after our marriage, as no ſettlements can be made before that's over, for fear of a diſcovery. He aſſured her, that his fortune and life ſhould be ever at her diſpoſal; and then went away, in order to write to *Ivy Caſtle*. Sir *Jaſper* and his Lady were delighted with the proſpect of ſecuring to their ſon a fine income, without being obliged to charge the eſtate with a jointure; piouſly determining

mining to make no ſettlement on their daughter-in-law, as after marriage ſhe could not oblige them to it. With theſe views they readily conſented to to the match; Lady *Hackit* (whoſe god is *Plutus*) was prodigiouſly elated at this event; but not ſo much ſo as to make her forget her uſual prudence (when intereſt was the point in queſtion); ſhe therefore begged Sir *Jaſper* would caution his ſon not to be too precipitate in the affair, but to get all poſſible intelligence about Mr. *Homes*'s fortune before he ventured to marry the girl; and, in the mean time, ſhe and Sir *Jaſper* both wrote to ſeveral of their acquaintance at *York*, to enquire the characters, *&c.* of their intended daughter-in-law and her father. They were anſwered by all their friends, that the perſons whom they aſked after had lived but a very ſhort

time in the town; that they made a very genteel appearance in the place, and paſſed for people of conſiderable fortune; that their conduct was unexceptionable, and that they paid all their bills regularly once a week; adding, they had heard that Mr. *Homes* was then in treaty for a good eſtate which was to be ſold in the county, and it was ſuppoſed would purchaſe it as ſoon as the title deeds could be brought from *London*, and it properly valued.

All this you ſee, my dear, looked well; ſo free conſent was given to Mr. *Hackit*, together with a hint, that delays might prove dangerous; upon which the young couple took the opportunity of Mr. *Homes*'s being gone out of town in order to meet the parties about the ſale of the above mentioned eſtate, to fly away in a poſt-chaiſe and four

four to *Scotland*. The father, on miſſing his daughter, made a violent riot, but did not attempt to purſue her, ſaying, as ſhe had flung herſelf away, ſhe might take the conſequence of it; ſo ordering his baggage to be packed up as faſt as poſſible, he took a *French* leave of the town, and ſet out for *London*. He vowed revenge on the girl her companion, for conniving at her elopement; and declared he would marry again, and return to the *Weſt-Indies*. Mr. *Hackit* and his bride, after ſpending a few days at *Edinburgh*, arrived at *Ivy Caſtle*, where great rejoicings were made upon the occaſion; however, the bride appeared to be very much alarmed on hearing of the abrupt manner in which her father had left *York*. She ſaid, ſhe knew not whither he was gone; if to the *Indies*, ſhe ſhould find great difficulties in getting

getting her money from him; adding, that ſhe would inſtantly write to her father's banker at *London*, who probably could inform her where he was. Every body in the family joined in requeſting her to loſe no time in the affair. She accordingly wrote, and received an anſwer from one of the banker's clerks, that his maſter was out of town, and that Mr. *Homes* had never been at their houſe ſince he went to *Yorkſhire*. In ſhort, time ſlipped on, and Mr. *Hackit* grew very uneaſy about the money; ſo propoſed to his Lady, that they ſhould ſet out for *London* together, in order to find Mr. *Homes*, who had been traced on the road, and found to have gone to that place. She conſented; accordingly they ſat out in Sir *Jaſper*'s poſt-chaiſe, with hired horſes. On their arrival at *Doncaſter*, Mrs. *Hackit* (who had appeared

peared all the day abſorbed in thought, and vaſtly melancholy) now ſaid, after ſeating herſelf at the inn, My dear Mr. *Hackit*, to be plain with you, it is a folly for us to go any farther in purſuit of a man who is not my father; and who, if he was found, neither can, nor would if he could, give me one ſhilling. I leave you to imagine, my dear, the ſituation of Mr. *Hackit*'s features at the cloſe of this very extraordinary declaration: He ſtared, he looked petrified with aſtoniſhment; and ſtammering, aſked his wife, if ſhe had loſt her ſenſes? She replied coolly, No, Mr. *Hackit*, what I now tell you is the real truth, I can deceive you no longer: I am an unfortunate girl, who has been led into doing wrong things from compulſion, never from inclination. I have, however, been well educated; am not ill born; and you will find,

find, if you treat me well, that I have a grateful heart. He not interrupting her, ſhe went on; "I confeſs you have "great reaſon to be angry with me for "deceiving you with regard to what "(I fear) was but too eſſential a motive "in your marrying me, I mean "money—but when you conſider, Sir, "that by refuſing to contribute my "aid to the impoſture, I ſhould have "riſqued the loſs both of my honour "and life. Your humanity and good-"nature, will, I hope, plead my excuſe, "ſituated as I was, and lead you "rather to pity, than blame me, for "an impoſition which I was com-"pelled to put upon you through "neceſſity, not choice. In every "other particular, excepting thoſe I "have already mentioned, I acted and "ſpoke with ſincerity; for I really "both liked and loved you, Mr. "*Hackit.*"

"*Hackit.*" Here ſhe burſt into a flood of tears. Her huſband, who had from the beginning of this alarming narration been rendered dumb with amazement, now raiſing his eyes on her, ſaid in a peremptory tone of voice, D—n you, Madam, who are you? Her anſwer to this genteel interrogation you may perhaps have in my next; for I this inſtant ſee Lord *Malcom*'s carriage drive into the court-yard, and my perſon muſt follow my heart, which is already flown to meet him: So adieu, my deareſt girl, ever yours,

Lewis Farm. LUCY SCOTT.

Miſs BOLTON *to Lady* LUCY SCOTT.

A Thouſand thanks, my dear *Lucy*, for your laſt long letter. What a ſurpriſing ſtory is that of Mr. *Hackit*'s marriage, *&c.* I cannot ſay that

that I am in the leaſt ſorry for the diſappointment of the old folks; their avarice merited ſuch a puniſhment; but as I have never perfectly defined the character of their ſon, I *half* pity him: I ſay *half*, becauſe I dare not decide how far he may be worthy of that ſentiment, till I know more of his Lady as well as himſelf. Her I feel for: What a dreadful ſituation muſt ſhe have been reduced to, which could have obliged her to act ſo baſe a part? I am inclined to think well of her, but ſhall ſuſpend my judgement till I hear the reſt of her ſtory. My curioſity will be upon the rack till you give me the ſequel of this extraordinary adventure.

Louiſa has received another letter from her lover. I know the hand; but as ſhe has never either mentioned her having heard from him, or communicated

municated any part of its contents to me, I have appeared ignorant of her reception of it: I think however, that I can obſerve her to be more thoughtful and reſerved ſince this event, than ſhe was for ſome time before; though I cannot ſay ſhe is leſs chearful, yet ſhe ſeems to be occupied by her own ideas, and is frequently abſent in converſation. I confeſs myſelf at a loſs for the motive why ſhe has never mentioned her having heard from Mr. *Merton* to me; and though her reſerve puzzles me, yet I am perfectly convinced that the reaſons ſhe has for keeping this one only ſecret from me, are good ones, though I can't find them out: I ſhall therefore not diſtreſs her, by ſhewing any deſire to be acquainted with them. I hate all tyranny in friendſhip, and am content to love my friends on their own terms; and

will

will therefore never ſuppoſe their conduct to be wrong, *merely* becauſe I don't underſtand it. Certain of the rectitude of their hearts, and propriety of their actions, as well as of their affection to me, I cannot harbour a doubt which might be injurious to *them*, and perhaps overturn my *own* peace, by creating diſtruſt in my boſom of that worth in them, which a long experience had taught me to love and revere. Now, though I have not known *Louiſa* any length of time, yet I think I read her heart, and am therefore perſuaded that ſhe cannot (without betraying the confidence her lover has placed in her) ſhew me his letter; and that it is in fact, *his* ſecret which ſhe keeps from me, and not her *own*: if that is the caſe, ſhe acts perfectly right in the affair.

The other morning having left ſomething which I wanted in the muſic-parlour, I quitted my dreſſing-room (where you know, *Lucy*, I generally ſpend my mornings alone) in order to fetch it: On opening the door, I diſcovered Lady *Jane* ſitting before the harpſichord, and Lord *Tatton* moſt devoutly kneeling by her ſide, holding one of her hands in his. I laughed at them, and then begged pardon for my unſeaſonable intruſion; when Lady *Jane*, recovering herſelf from the little confuſion my ſudden entrance had thrown her into, ſaid, with a ſprightly air, I not only forgive you, my dear, but thank you heartily for having interrupted Lord *Tatton* in the midſt of one of the moſt rapturous ſpeeches I ever heard off the theatre. I am vaſtly glad you have put an end to it, *Julia*, for I ſwear, I began to catch

the infection, and ſhould perhaps, if I had heard it out, have been as much in the melting mood as his Lordſhip. Go, ſaid ſhe, puſhing him gently from her, I won't hear any more of your paſſion to-day, it has diſcompoſed me too much already; and I begin to ſuſpect my heart to be a much greater idiot than I took it for. Here your brother ſeized her hand, and ſaid a number of ſoft things upon the occaſion: I left them together, in ſpite of *Jenny*'s ardent entreaties to the contrary. Love's a mighty ſtupid affair, *Lucy*, when one's not an actor in it: I thought the converſation of your brother and his fair exceedingly fooliſh, not conſidering that they would probably have made the ſame obſervation on me and my *Harry*, had they found us ſo ſituated. I think with you, that theſe young folks are a very

proper match for one another, for which reaſon I ſhall take care not to interrupt any of their *tête à tête* parties for the future; though I fancy things are pretty well ſettled between them by this time, conſidering the complying humour in which I left Lady *Jane*, who I dare ſay, will have no objection to being Lady *Tatton*, if her friends approve her choice, which there is no doubt but they will. How I envy their fate! how ſmooth are the paths they tread towards the attainment of their wiſhes! but I won't repine—*George Boothby* arrived here laſt week; 'tis ſome years ſince I ſaw him; he's much altered for the worſe, I think; in ſhort, I don't like him; there's a gloomy haughtineſs in his manner which diſguſts me; how unlike his brother, *Lucy*, both in perſon and character! and yet he

ſeems to like me, for his behaviour is always ſoftened on my appearance: He even modulates his voice to the tendereſt tone whenever he addreſſes his diſcourſe to me; and that he never fails doing whenever he can, and appears to pay no attention to any body but me in all companies. Strange! does he think to rival his brother in my heart? Vain hope! inſolent preſumption! If his father ſhould penetrate into his deſign, how would his honeſt heart glow with anger and reſentment! but I hope I miſconſtrue his conduct. Perhaps he has adopted the manners of the *French* men, who, they tell me, make love to every thing that wears a petticoat; I wiſh it may be ſo. His ſiſter and he look very ſhy upon one another: Lady *Jane* now ſees nobody but your brother; and he, in return, perceives nor liſtens to any

thing but her; ſo I have a bleſſed time of it. *Louiſa* has prevailed on her father and mother not to go to town this winter, after having conſulted my inclination on that head. I readily acquieſced with her deſires, as I prefer retirement to the noiſe and buſtle of *London*; yet I cannot conceive her motive for this requeſt, as I am informed by her brother, that Sir *Francis*, Lady *Merton* and ſon, are expected ſhortly in *England*, and will doubtleſs ſpend the winter in town. 'Tis odd that ſhe ſhould avoid meeting her lover; but ſhe's all a myſtery at preſent. *George Boothby* told me the other day, that young *Merton* was perfectly recovered of his wound, as he had been informed by a Gentleman who had ſeen him in the South of *France*. I make no doubt, Miſs *Bolton*, ſaid he, but you have been acquainted

with the whole affair by my ſiſter. "I am really ſorry that I wounded the "young fellow; but upon the whole, "it is quite as well that the connexion "ſhould have been broke off between "them, as Mr. *Merton*'s friends will "probably never give their conſent to "the match; and my father is the laſt "man on earth who would ſuffer a "a clandeſtine marriage in his family." An involuntary ſigh eſcaped me, when I replied, I believe ſo. Ah! Miſs *Bolton*, why that ſigh? (ſaid he, looking tenderly at me) ſure you don't ſtill love my brother? I bluſhed, he thus continued; if ſo, how ſupremely happy is he, and how unworthy of ſuch exemplary conſtancy from the moſt amiable of her ſex? Unworthy! I repeated, that's impoſſible; he will ever be moſt worthy of all that unabated tenderneſs which I feel for him; nor will

will it ever be in the power of the moſt refined malice to hurt him in my opinion. What! he replied, would you perſiſt in loving a man, who, faithleſs to his vows, ſhould have preferred another woman to you? The propoſition is impoſſible, I anſwered, my face glowing with indignation; but were it as you ſeem to inſinuate, yes, I believe I ſhould ſtill love my *Harry*; at leaſt, Iam poſitively ſure I could never love another man. Here I broke from him; he endeavoured to hold me, but in vain; reſentment gave me ſtrength, and I left him. How baſe muſt his mind be, who can thus, through a motive of ſelf-intereſt, calumniate his own brother? but the ill ſucceſs of his ſcheme will, I hope, prove his puniſhment: Nothing leſs than the conviction of my five ſenſes can ever make me doubt the faith of my be-

loved *Henry*. This *George Boothby* has ruffled my ſpirits and vexed me; I will therefore lay down my pen, after bidding you adieu, my amiable *Lucy*. Yours moſt truly,

Farnaby Abbey. J. BOLTON.

Lady LUCY SCOTT *to Miſs* BOLTON.

SO, my dear, your curioſity, you ſay, is upon the rack till you hear the ſequel of Mrs. *Hackit*'s (or rather Miſs *Jenny Homes*'s) adventures; but I cannot bring myſelf to give you this ſatisfaction till I have talked for a full hour about Lord *Malcom* and myſelf. Well then; I flew to the chaiſe, and had he not jumped out of it before I could reach it, ſhould, I really believe, have offered my hand to have aſſiſted him, ſo fooliſhly confuſed and rejoiced was I at the ſight of

of his Lordſhip. He perceived the pleaſure his preſence gave me, and was impudent enough to tell me ſo. I thought it would be in vain to deny the fact; ſo hand in hand we walked amicably into the houſe, where he was received with great reſpect, but more pleaſure, by all the family. He don't look well, *Julia*; he has ſomething which preys upon his mind, I fear; for I frequently hear him ſigh when his eyes meet mine, yet I am not cruel. His father, I ſuppoſe, won't conſent to our union; that muſt be the thing. —Be it ſo—he can't however hinder us from loving one another, and 'tis but living ſingle till he is dead; for my part, I am in no hurry to be married — but hark, he calls, I muſt break off.

It was to deſire me to take a walk with him, to which I conſented. We were

were alone; he then informed me that he had mentioned his attachment for my Ladyſhip to his mother, who is (ſaid he) one of the moſt valuable of women, as well as the tendereſt of parents. "She was charmed with the "choice I had made, but told me, ſhe "much feared my father would object "to *you*, Lady *Lucy*, as being the "daughter of Lord *Longſdown*, who "it ſeems, once oppoſed him at an "election in his own county, and "actually flung him out for that ſeſ-"ſion of parliament, though it had "coſt him upwards of ten thouſand "pounds in order to be choſe for it, "in the life-time of his father. This "circumſtance he has never forgiven: "However, my mother obſerved, that "as you, my dear *Lucy*, was ſo truly "amiable both in perſon and mind, "ſo nobly born, and had ſo good a

fortune,

" fortune, ſhe thought a little art well
" applied, might bring the affair to
" bear; for you know, continued ſhe,
" your father has a great knowledge
" of the world, and nobody has a
" more refined taſte, or is quicker at
" diſtinguiſhing ſuperior merit than he
" is; therefore, if Lady *Lucy Scott*
" could be introduced to his acquaint-
" ance under another name than her
" own, it is ten to one but her beauty
" and accompliſhments would become
" the objects of his admiration and
" and eſteem; and thoſe once gained,
" it would be very eaſy to conquer his
" prejudices againſt her family, in
" favour of a perſon he had con-
" ceived a high opinion of. For I
" know, my dear, that the moſt ar-
" dent wiſh of his heart is your hap-
" pineſs; and that he would ſacri-
" fice every other conſideration to the
" attainment of that end. It would be

" pleaſant

" pleaſant enough, ſaid ſhe, ſmiling,
" if my Lord *Kelſo* ſhould, from his
" approbation of your miſtreſs, be the
" firſt to propoſe her to you for a wife;
" and I cannot help thinking, from
" my knowledge of his taſte and cha-
" racter, that, prejudice apart, ſhe
" would be the woman of his choice
" for a daughter-in-law. I have my-
" ſelf been frequently in company
" with Lady *Lucy*, whoſe figure and
" behaviour always charmed me; and
" often in the interior of my heart, I
" have wiſhed that there had been no
" coolneſs between our families, as I
" thought ſhe would make a moſt de-
" ſireable wife for you in every reſpect.
" There is ſomething ſo irreſiſtably
" beautiful in her perſon, as well as
" pleaſing in her manner, that one
" muſt be inſenſible not to admire her.
" But does ſhe love you well enough,

" *Auguſtus*,

" *Auguſtus*, to enter into our ſcheme?
" If you think ſhe does, engage her
" to honour us with a viſit at *Hopton-*
" *Hall*; it ſhall be my buſineſs to
" render the place agreeable to her.
" I will introduce her to my huſband
" as being the child of a deceaſed
" friend of mine: A letter or two
" may paſs between her Ladyſhip and
" me, wrote on purpoſe to be ſhewn
" him. She muſt, however, neceſſarily
" drop her title for that time, and may
" aſſume any name ſhe pleaſes; or
" I will give her one of ſome ancient
" friend of mine, which will perhaps
" be better. And now, my dear, aſ-
" ſure her of my love; tell her how
" ardently I long to call her daughter;
" and that ſhe ſhall ever find in me a
" warm friend, as well as a tender
" parent." Here my Lord *Malcom*
was ſilent for a minute, and ſo was I;

when

when looking at me, he ſaid, This, Madam, was the ſcheme of a fond mother to render her darling ſon happy; her affection for an only child hid from her too partial eyes the preſumption it would be in me, even to ſuppoſe, that the lovely Lady *Lucy Scott* could ever be brought to condeſcend ſo far as to comply with this her romantick requeſt. "Nay, I am aſto-"niſhed at my own temerity in daring "to mention it to you; nor could "I ever have preſumed ſo far, had it "not been in obedience to a parent's "intreaties. I am ſenſible that I can-"not live without you, my *Lucy*; "and what will not ſelf-preſervation "urge us to do?" I anſwered, that the ſcheme he had juſt propoſed, was of ſo extraordinary a nature, as to require a great deal of conſideration before I durſt venture to put it in practice: That

That, however, as I really intended to marry him (in caſe *his* parents and *mine* would give their conſent), I ſhould conſult Lady *Longſdown* on the affair; and if ſhe approved of the plan, I myſelf would not object to it. Lord *Malcom* loſt his ſenſes with joy on this declaration of mine, ſo favourable to his wiſhes. He thanked me on his knees for ſuch condeſcending goodneſs (as he called it); in ſhort, 'tis no matter to you what he ſaid: Let it ſuffice that he confirmed me in the opinion, that he is the moſt worthy, as well as the moſt amiable man living, (excepting one, you know, *Julia*). I ſhall return to *London* ſhortly, in order to conſult with my mother about this matter; firmly determined to act in it according to her directions. My father (I think) ought to be acquainted with it too; I ſhall not chooſe to take

ſuch

ſuch a ſtep without having his approbation; and yet I long to go to *Hopton Hall*, *Julia*; becauſe, where we really wiſh to pleaſe, we ſeldom fail in the attempt. 'Tis from this reaſon that I am vain enough to ſuppoſe that the father of my lover will not diſlike me. If I ſucceed, then my *Malcom* and I ſhall be happy; if not, why, we are but where we were. Let us ſuppoſe even that the world ſhould be let into the ſecret, they can only ſay "that "I took great pains to get a huſband, "and had not ſucceeded;" and probably the men will not be fond of having ſo forward a girl for a wife: Be it ſo; for as my reſolution is fixed as fate, never to marry, unleſs to Lord *Malcom*, I ſhall be glad rather than mortified, at the being releaſed from the perſecution of the reſt of his ſex. The good natured and rational part of the

the world, I flatter myſelf, will ſay, we deſerved each other; and that my Lord *Kelſo* behaved like a capricious old fool, in objecting to ſo eligible a match for his ſon, as the daughter of Lord *Longſdown*; and at their tribunal alone I deſire to be tried.

In my next I will continue the hiſtory of *Ivy Caſtle*; in the mean time, give my kind love to my brother; I wiſh him and his fair one happy; they will (I dare ſay) meet with no oppoſition to their deſires from either of their families.

My poor penitent *Suſan* is much recovered; I hope time will entirely reconcile her to her fate. I told her this morning, that my brother, I fancied, would ſhortly be married to Lady *Jane Carr*; ſhe anſwered, colouring, that ſhe was moſt ſincerely glad to hear his Lordſhip had made ſo proper

a choice; and ſighing, ſaid, May they be both as happy in each other, as my wiſhes and prayers would make them! I obſerved ſhe looked ſerious whilſt ſhe ſpoke; but ſhe ſhed no tears at the news, nor appeared the leaſt dejected all the reſt of the day. I was greatly pleaſed to find her ſo rational on the occaſion.

Adieu, my dear *Julia*; the behaviour of Miſs *Boothby* ſurpriſes me in many reſpects: Time will probably diſcover her motives for being ſo myſterious. Don't mind *George Boothby*, my dear; 'tis eaſy to perceive that he is, or wants to be, his brother's rival; for which reaſon I would not believe a word he ſaid. God bleſs you, my ſweet friend: Write to me in *Groſvenor-Square*, as I purpoſe being there ſome part of next week. I grieve at your intention of paſſing the winter in the country; however, I will,

if

poſſible, contrive to pay you a viſit there. 'Tis an age ſince I laſt ſaw you.

Yours, moſt truly,

Lewis Farm. LUCY SCOTT.

Miſs BOLTON *to Lady* LUCY SCOTT.

IT is ſo long ſince I wrote to you, my dear *Lucy*, that I fear you have accuſed me of either idleneſs or neglect; I truſt however, that you will pardon my ſilence, when you have read the following account of what has happened at the Abbey.

About ten days after I received your laſt favour, and was actually preparing to anſwer it, in order that it might meet you in town, *George Boothby* ſaid, he had abſolute buſineſs to tranſact at *Durham*, for which reaſon he informed us that he ſhould ſet out for that place the day following. Lord

Tatton propoſed going part of the way with him on his road to his father's, and Lady *Jane* was to leave us in a few days. On the morning of the departure of our beaux, *Louiſa* obſerving me to be buſy writing, and Lady *Jane* employed in drawing a better likeneſs of her lover than that which I formerly mentioned to you, ſaid to her mother (as ſhe has ſince told me) that ſeeing we were ſo engaged, ſhe would, with her permiſſion, borrow the chariot for a few hours, and take a little airing; when ſhe could call and aſk her old acquaintance *Nancy Jones*, how ſhe did. Mrs. *Boothby*, pleaſed to hear her propoſe any ſcheme which might contribute either to her health or amuſement, freely conſented. She therefore ordered the chariot to be got ready; and in the mean time went into

into Lady *Jane*'s room, where, after ſtaying a quarter of an hour, ſhe came into mine, with her hat and cloak on. I aſked her if ſhe was going out? She anſwered with a ſigh, "Yes, my dear-"eſt *Julia*, I will take a little ride to "the Parſon's, the exerciſe will do me "good." What, by yourſelf? ſaid I. No, no, that muſt not be, I will go along with you. By no means, (ſhe replied with eagerneſs) I know you love to ſpend your mornings alone, ſo I inſiſt upon not diſturbing you; when, kiſſing my cheek, ſhe flew out of the room like lightning. I thought, when ſhe was gone, that there was ſomething agitated and queer in her behaviour; but, as the whole of it had been for ſome time paſt rather enigmatical, I continued writing, and thought no more of it. This was about ten o'clock in the morning; at

twelve the chariot returned, with a meſſage by the footman, that Miſs *Boothby* dined at Parſon *Jones*'s, and ſhould not return till the evening. As ſhe was fond of Miſs *Jones*, we were not ſurpriſed at her ſtaying there to dinner. About ſix in the evening, Mrs. *Boothby* ordered the horſes to be put to, in order to fetch her daughter home; when Lady *Jane* propoſed that ſhe and I ſhould go in it, to accompany *Louiſa* back, by way of a ride. I agreed to the propoſal. We were ſcarce drove from the door, before Lady *Jane* ſaid, My dear Miſs *Bolton*, we ſhall not find *Louiſa* at Parſon *Jones*'s. No! I replied, with ſome emotion, where is ſhe then? "In the "arms of her lover, Mr. *Merton*, I "ſuppoſe, by this time." Softly, cried ſhe, catching me by the arm (as ſhe perceived me much alarmed at what ſhe

ſhe had ſaid) this affair was no contrivance of mine, I knew nothing of it till ſhe was gone, when I found this billet (ſhewing me a bit of paper) on my table where I had been drawing; nor did I perceive it till I went to dreſs, and was putting away my papers. Here it is, ſaid ſhe, giving it me. I opened it haſtily, and read as follows:

"My dear Lady *Jane*, I conjure "you by our long friendſhip, if you "find this note ſoon after I am gone, "not to communicate its contents till "the evening. If on the contrary, "you ſhould not have perceived it till "an hour or two after my departure, "reſt aſſured that I ſhall then be out "of the reach of any enquiries about "me. I don't deceive you, my dear; "you may depend upon the truth of "what I ſay. Be ſo kind as to inform

" my dear *Julia*, that in one of her " dreſſing-boxes ſhe will find a letter, " which will, I truſt, in ſome meaſure " apologize to the friend of my heart, " for the myſteriouſneſs of my pre- " ſent, as well as late behaviour to " her. I hope ſoon to rejoin my dear- " eſt Lady *Jane*, and the reſt of my " valuable friends; till when, I beg " your Ladyſhip and they will put the " moſt favourable conſtruction on my " conduct. I am in haſte, ever your " obliged and faithful, *&c.*" In the poſtſcript was wrote, " Don't give " *Julia* any hint of my having wrote " to her before the evening."

I was petrified with aſtoniſhment on reading this note, when Lady *Jane* rouſed me by ſaying, " It was in order " to have an opportunity of ſpeaking " to you alone, that I propoſed our " fetching *Louiſa*. I tried all day to

" catch

" catch an occaſion of talking to you,
" but the company who dined with us
" prevented me; and then I was afraid
" of the old folks ſuſpecting ſome-
" thing, I ſuppoſe, becauſe I was con-
" ſcious that I had a ſecret to diſcloſe
" to you." Good God! (I exclaimed) how ſhall I ever break this extraordinary event to her fond parents? But it muſt be done, ſo we had better return home immediately. So ſaying, I pulled the ſtring, and bid the coachman turn about, and drive back as faſt as poſſible; hoping that in her letter ſhe might perhaps have traced out the road in which ſhe would have me proceed in this unhappy affair. We ſoon arrived at the Abbey, where meeting Mr. *Boothby*, he expreſſed his ſurpriſe at our quick return, aſking, where *Louiſa* was? I anſwered, that we had met a ſervant, who told us, that a neighbour-

neighbouring Lady would bring her home in half an hour in her coach; ſo ſaying, I quitted him, and flew up ſtairs in ſearch of the letter, which I ſoon found; the contents here follow.

" My ever dear, ever valued friend;
" I know the goodneſs of your heart,
" and therefore flatter myſelf that you
" will undertake the difficult taſk of
" reconciling my worthy parents to a
" daughter, who has apparently at
" leaſt, forfeited all right to their af-
" fection. But you, *Julia*, who know
" the hiſtory of my life, will not, I
" hope, ſuſpect me capable of devi-
" ating from the paths of honour.
" No, my dear girl, however ſtrong
" appearances may be againſt me, do,
" I conjure you, become the bond for
" the diſcretion of your friend, and
" boldly aſſure my family, that I will
" juſtify the ſtep I have taken to

both

" both their and your ſatisfaction in
" a very ſhort time; I will then alſo
" expoſe my reaſons for the conceal-
" ment of my deſigned elopement,
" even from you, my *Julia*. I am
" not at liberty to be more explicit at
" preſent, my next ſhall entirely clear
" up the affair; till when, I implore
" you to ſooth and comfort my dear
" father and mother, by the ſtrongeſt
" aſſurances that I am in the moſt
" reſpectable company, and under the
" protection of an unexceptionable
" Lady of their acquaintance; and
" that I ſhall ſoon return to *Farnaby*
" *Abbey*, there to aſk their pardon and
" bleſſing on my knees. And you,
" my *Julia*, think candidly of my late
" reſerved behaviour to you; *my* heart
" ſuffered more than *yours* did, in act-
" ing ſuch a part; but I will explain
" it all when we meet; till then, God

" bleſs

" bleſs and preſerve you all, prays " your obliged and affectionate, *&c.*"

This letter, you ſee, my dear, was no leſs myſterious than her conduct. I put it into my pocket, and with my legs tottering under me, went down into the parlour. Mr. *Boothby*, on ſeeing me enter the room, ſaid, my dear Miſs *Bolton*, *Louiſa* is not come home yet. She won't come home to-night, I replied with a ſerious air. What do you mean, my dear Madam? cried my guardian. Why Sir, I anſwered, all girls are not ſo patient under reſtraint and contradiction as you have found me to be; the paſſions of *young* people are not always regulated by the prudence of the *old* ones. Your daughter had fixed her affections on a deſerving young Gentleman, who is her equal in every reſpect, and a proper match on both

ſides;

ſides; but his friends not being reaſonable upon the ſubject, or, in other words, not approving their plan, the young folks have (I ſuppoſe) taken a trip to *Scotland* together, in order to put an end to all diſputes on that head. However (continued I with a more ſerious air) wherever *Louiſa* is gone, I will be her bond, that ſhe has acted as prudently as the circumſtances of affairs would admit of. They did not interrupt me; I believe amazement had tyed their tongues; when Mrs. *Boothby* ſighed out, O my loſt child! and ſunk on the floor. I raiſed her; Mr. *Boothby* looking ſternly at me, ſaid, if *you* was the girl's confidant in this affair, Miſs *Bolton*, you ought in honour to have informed either her mother or me of it. I think I ought, I replied coldly. Mrs. *Boothby*, who was now recovered, and had probably heard

heard what had paſt, looking on her her huſband, ſaid in a faint voice, is it poſſible, my dear, that you can ſuſpect our amiable ward (after the numberleſs proofs we have had of her prudence as well as friendſhip to us and ours) of being acceſſory to a ſcheme which muſt for ever ruin the reputation of our child, and conſequently deſtroy our future peace? I made no anſwer to this obliging reproach addreſſed to my guardian; but he caught my hand, and wiping his eyes at the ſame time, ſaid, "Can "you forgive me, Miſs *Bolton*, in "pity to the diſtraction of a diſtreſſed "parent? I knew not what I was ſay-"ing juſt now; but my heart moſt "honeſtly abjures every ſentiment "which can in any manner injure the "luſtre of your character, or the rec-"titude of your mind." I aſſured him

him that I was not in the leaſt offended at any thing he had ſaid, for two obvious reaſons; the firſt (and perhaps the ſtrongeſt) was my perfect innocence as to what he accuſed me of; and the ſecond, becauſe I thought his preſent ſituation truly pityable. I begged they would both liſten to what I knew of this affair; and then produced *Louiſa*'s letters to Lady *Jane* and myſelf, which were evidences ſufficient for the juſtification of us both, had we ſtood in need of them. The old folks ſeemed to receive ſome degree of comfort from their daughter's poſitive aſſertion, that ſhe was in good company, and that of her own ſex too, and aſked me my opinion on the matter. I anſwered, that I would be reſponſible for the veracity of my friend; and adviſed them to ſuppoſe the beſt, and make themſelves as eaſy

as

as they could, till they heard from her, which I apprehended would be in a ſhort time. They embraced me with tears again, ſaying, I was their only ſupport, their comforter, *&c.*

I would indeed, *Lucy*, lay down my life to ſerve theſe two worthy people. My heart actually bleeds for them. Lady *Jane* leaves us to-morrow, which I am ſorry for, as ſhe is really not only a lovely, but a good girl, and ſympathizes in the diſtreſs of her friends, with a ſenſibility which does her honour. Laſt night when we were retired in order to go to bed, ſhe came into the room, and ſeating herſelf, ſaid, Miſs *Bolton*, I am perſuaded that *Louiſa*'s reaſons for this elopement, will, when known, ſufficiently juſtify her conduct; but, as I am going to *London*, where I ſhall probably hear this affair frequently mentioned,

tioned, I beg you would be kind enough to inſtruct me how to behave, and what to ſay on the occaſion. I will follow your directions with exactitude; I mean (you may be certain) to ſerve my friend; but by ſtumbling on in my unthinking way, I may perhaps injure where I wiſh to defend. "You "are, my dear, much wiſer than I "am, ſo do counſel me how to act; "for as I was upon the ſpot when ſhe "went away, I ſhall be aſked a thou-"ſand impertinent queſtions about "her." I anſwered, Do yourſelf juſtice, Lady *Jane*, and know from me, that the goodneſs of your heart can only be equalled by that of your head; for which reaſon your own judgement will guide you better than I can. However, ſince you deſire it, my opinion is, that it will be the beſt way for you never to ſtart the ſubject; and when

other people introduce it, only do juſtice to the character of your friend in general terms, and leave event to do the reſt; but above all things, avoid informing any one of your ſuſpicions that ſhe is gone off with Mr. *Merton*, leſt it ſhould reach the ears of Sir *Francis* and his Lady, by which means you might inadvertently defeat *Louiſa*'s purpoſes; and if *we* keep her ſecret, I fancy *few* people will be able to gueſs at the name of her lover. Lady *Jane* thanked me for my advice in the moſt amiable, tender, and polite terms; at the ſame time begging the continuation of my friendſhip. I eaſily promiſed what has long been out of my power to refuſe to her merit. She went away this morning; ſo now I am quite alone, but will ſend to-morrow for *Nancy Jones* to keep me company, or rather to walk about with me.

Here

Here I left off writing, nor could reſume my pen for ſome time on account of Mrs. *Boothby*'s being taken dangerouſly ill, owing, as they ſuppoſe, to the perturbation of her mind. During the violence of her diſorder, my anxiety for her health obliterated all other ideas from my head. I have pretty near exhauſted my ſtrength by my cloſe attendance on her; but I am more than paid by the ecſtatic joy her recovery gives me. Words can never paint the lively gratitude of this eſtimable pair for my attention and care of Mrs. *Boothby*. Alas! I am ſtill, and ever ſhall be, infinitely their debtor. What do I not owe them! When Mrs. *Boothby*'s diſorder was at the criſis, ſhe thought herſelf a dying, and we all believed her to be ſo; ſhe begged her huſband to conſent to my

union with *Harry*. I could not then join my entreaties to hers; ſelf-conſideration was totally abſorbed in my ſenſibility of her ſufferings, and the dread of loſing ſo valuable a friend. He appeared moved at her petition in that intereſting moment, when death ſeemed to quiver on her lips, and anſwered, "Thou beloved partner of "my heart, if *Harry* deſerves ſuch a "treaſure, time may perhaps bring it "about." This dear parent (for ſuch ſhe has ever been to me) is, thank God, out of danger. Her ſon *George* is expected at the Abbey in a few days. I am ſorry for it; he is not the ſort of man I like, and leſs ſo, now his ſiſter is gone, whoſe flight he knows nothing of, as his father feared the violence of his temper. He muſt know it however, I ſuppoſe, on his arrival here.

Adieu,

Adieu, I am not well, but ever moſt affectionately yours,

Farnaby Abbey. JULIA BOLTON.

P. S. I had forgot to tell you that Miſs *Jones* never ſaw *Louiſa* on the day ſhe left us. The coachman ſays, that when they were near the village, ſhe bid him ſtop, ſaying, "I will get out and walk "now, for I ſee Mr. and Miſs "*Jones* are coming to meet me; "ſo do you, *Thomas*, (ſpeaking "to the footman) return with the "chariot to the Abbey, and let it "fetch me again in the evening, "as I ſhall dine at the parſonage." the ſervants ſay, they ſaw her trip lightly over the meadow, and join ſome company, which they ſuppoſed to be the Parſon and his daughter. This is all the

information the fellows could give us. I wonder we don't hear from her, as I know her heart is too good to be capable of enjoying eaſe, whilſt ſhe is the cauſe of pain to others. Adieu.

Lady LUCY SCOTT *to Miſs* BOLTON.

MY dear *Julia*, what an amazement has your laſt kind letter thrown me into! Miſs *Boothby*, the melancholy, gentle *Louiſa*, has venture to take a ſtep, and that without conſulting any of her friends too, which would have ſtartled my wild ladyſhip even to have thought of. But theſe languiſhing girls, I tell you, my dear, are the leaſt to be truſted; they don't diſſipate the ſame quantity of animal ſpirits upon trifles, that we more ſprightly ones do; but bottle them

them all cloſe up for the uſe of their lovers, in whom alone they live, move, and have their being. Well, I heartily wiſh ſhe may be happy; 'tis an irregular ſtep to be ſure, which ſhe has taken; but we do not know the motives which induced her to take it, ſo muſt charitably ſuſpend our judgements till we have heard what ſhe has to urge in her own juſtification. In the mean while, I gueſs from my own impatience to know more of this affair, what yours muſt be for the continuation of Mrs. *Hackit*'s ſtory, whom I left (if I remember right) upon the point of anſwering to her huſband's interrogation of Who are you? My name, ſhe replied, you know, was *Homes*; my father was governor of *Madraſs* in the *Eaſt-Indies*: My ſiſter and ſelf were born there; and when we were about five or ſix years of age, my mother

(who was a *German*, and of the *Romiſh* religion) propoſed the ſending us to a convent in *France* for our education. After many arguments urged, and many perſuaſions uſed, my father agreed to it, on condition that we ſhould be ſuffered to retain the proteſtant faith, in which he had taken care to have us inſtructed as far as our years would admit of. Letters were accordingly wrote to a *French* banker of my father's acquaintance at *R*—, deſiring him to ſeek out a proper nunnery for us, and to write the particulars as ſoon as poſſible. He did ſo; and every thing being ſettled according to his requeſt about our penſions, *&c.* he took our paſſage in a *French* veſſel bound for *Port L'Orient*; when he and my mother, after having taken a very affectionate leave of us, put my ſiſter and I on board the ſhip, accompanied

companied by an old governeſs, who was a *Frenchwoman*; and on whoſe prudence and care they could rely. This woman had taken us from our black nurſes, and was now delighted to meet with an opportunity of returning to her native country, without its coſting her any thing; beſides, ſhe was really fond of us children. I remember very little of the voyage, as I was younger than my ſiſter. On our arrival at the port, my father's friend met us, took us and our baggage from on board the ſhip, and conducted us and our governeſs to an inn in the town, where we lay that night. The next day we took a tender leave of the old *Frenchwoman*, who ſet out early in the morning for *Paris*, and then got into a coach with our guide the banker, which carried us in a few hours to the convent, where we were

received

received with pleaſure, and treated with the utmoſt good humour and reſpect. We were there taught every accompliſhment which was judged neceſſary for young Ladies, who (it was ſuppoſed) would one day or other be poſſeſſed of immenſe fortunes, as my father had no children but us. The nuns piouſly endeavoured to make me learn by heart the catechiſm, which, in their religion, is really a volume; the dryneſs of the ſubject, added to the enormity of its length, made me reſolutely refuſe having any thing to do with it, and more eſpecially as I then recollected my father's ſtrict injunctions, that we ſhould not practiſe the religion they were of. I knew not what he meant at the time when he charged me never to become a Roman Catholick; but I made uſe of his orders now, to avoid a taſk which

was

was not in the leaſt ſuited to either my genius or taſte. My ſiſter, who had more mildneſs in her compoſition than I had, was eaſier wrought upon, and conſequently paid an implicit obedience to all their deſires; by which means they at laſt prevailed on her, when ſhe was about fifteen, to take the veil. I ſaw her make her proceſſion, with a grief which no language can expreſs; and was half tempted to have followed her example, in order to put it out of the power of our parents ever to have ſeparated us; but ſhe herſelf ſoon adviſed me to the contrary. Her vows once made, the nuns flung off the maſk they had ſo long worn in order to entrap her; and now aſſumed the rigid rod of monaſtic tyranny, which is frequently uſed without mercy on the younger nuns, by their ſeniors, in order to bend them early

early to their yoke. All their careſſes and inſinuating arts were now laid aſide, no indulgence was allowed; and my ſiſter was kept up to the rigour of her order. Thus deceived herſelf, ſhe omitted no arguments which might conduce to the keeping me from falling into the ſnare. We heard generally once a year from my father, and wrote to him as often; but I was abſolutely forbid mentioning a word about my ſiſter's intention of taking the veil to him; and as our letters were all read by the ſuperior, I could not do ſo without her knowledge. About this time a veſſel arrived from *India*, in which we had letters; my father informed us in them, that he was ſettling his affairs at laſt with the company, and would, as ſoon as circumſtances would admit, come to *France*, and carry us with

him to *England*, where he intended to ſpend the remainder of his days with his beloved children, whoſe long abſence from him had made him miſerable. He had not then (you'll obſerve) heard that my ſiſter was a nun. Some time after this we had another letter from him, in which he ſays, he cannot get a paſſage with his effects (which were very conſiderable) in a *French* ſhip that ſeaſon; and ſhould therefore embark on board the firſt *Engliſh* one he could meet with homeward bound; promiſing not to ſtay in *London* above a month, before he came to *France* to fetch my ſiſter and I. In all theſe letters, as well as thoſe which had preceded them, except the two or three firſt, which were wrote after our departure from *Madraſs*, he never mentioned my mother. My ſiſter and I grew uneaſy at his ſilence

ſilence on that head, and began to fear that ſhe was dead; eſpecially as we never had omitted ſending our duty to her in every letter we wrote my father, and he conſtantly perſiſted in taking no notice of her. At laſt I reſolved to write to our friend the banker, to enquire if he could ſatisfy our doubts on that point. He anſwered me, that he believed ſome diſagreeable events had happened in Mr. *Homes*'s family, which had occaſioned a ſeparation between him and his Lady ſome years ago; adding, that he knew my mother had long ſince left the *Indies*, but was ignorant of where ſhe was gone. This piece of intelligence gave great affliction both to my ſiſter and ſelf. A year had now paſſed without our having heard either of, or from, my father; when one day the banker ſent me a letter from him,

dated

dated *England*. He tells me, he is juſt landed; inveighs bitterly againſt my ſiſter's diſobedience to his poſitive orders; renounces her for ever as his child; and adds, "It will, however, "be the better for you, *Jenny*, as you "muſt now poſſeſs my whole fortune, "which is really immenſe; ſo that, "child, you will on my death be, "perhaps, the richeſt heireſs in the "three nations." (My father was born in *Ireland*). He then told me, that he ſhould lodge at Mr. *Wilker*'s, in ſuch a ſtreet in *London*, as that Gentleman had been his agent and correſpondent for many years; adding, that as ſoon as he had left his affairs ſafe in *Wilker*'s hands, he would immediately ſet off for *France*, in order to fetch me. I was impatient to ſee him (as you may ſuppoſe, Mr. *Hackit*); however, one month, ſix weeks paſſed, yet ſtill I heard nothing

nothing of my father; at laſt I wrote to him, but received no anſwer; when one day, as I was afflicting myſelf from the moſt dreadful apprehenſions about my father, I was told that our friend the banker aſked to ſpeak with me in the parlour; I flew, rather than run to meet him. On my entrance he accoſted me with the moſt dejected countenance, ſaying, he was very ſorry to be the meſſenger of ill news; but that he had received a letter from my father's friend the merchant, in whoſe houſe he had reſided in *London*, informing him, "that Mr. *Homes* died "ſuddenly a few days after his arrival "in *England*; and, that in conſider-"ation of the orphans, he had made "the ſtricteſt enquiries after his ef-"fects, but to no purpoſe; not hav-"ing been able hitherto to find out "where he had placed his money, *&c.*

"there

" there being found in his pockets " only twenty guineas, his watch, and " ſome other trifles, but no papers " which could let them in the leaſt into " the ſtate of his affairs; adding, that " the money he had about him was " barely ſufficient to defray the ex- " pences of his funeral," and ſo concluded his letter.

I was thunderſtruck at this news. The banker went on, " Now, Miſs, " I am afraid there has been ſome foul " play in this matter; I would there- " fore adviſe you to go immediately " over to *England*, and try what can " be done in order to recover your " fortune; for that your father had a " very large one, both I and hundreds " more know to be a certainty; and " you can't ſtay here, my dear, ſaid " he, as I have but one hundred " pounds of yours in my hands; ſo

"take my advice, pack up your "things; I will diſcharge your penſion, "and what other little debts you may "have, and ſee you properly con-"veyed to *England*." What my feelings were on his finiſhing this harangue, you may eaſier gueſs than I can deſcribe; nor is the knowledge of them neceſſary to my ſtory, which I much fear you have already thought too long. *Hackit*, who took all ſhe ſaid down in ſhort-hand, made no reply; and ſhe went on. As ſoon as I could ſpeak, I told him, that I would follow his advice, as I had now no other friend in the world but himſelf. The poor man wept and took his leave. I went inſtantly to my ſiſter's cell, where I narrated to her, as well as I was able, all I had juſt heard. She was not ſo much affected at the ſhocking news as I was, but ſhe was greatly

ſo.

ſo. She agreed with our friend the banker, that I ought to go to *England*, and endeavour to recover my father's effects, if poſſible; requeſting me ardently, to allow her a penſion in caſe I ſucceeded. This petition was needleſs, as I loved her too ſincerely, not to conſider *her* intereſt as nearly as *my* own. The next morning I quitted the convent: The parting of myſelf and ſiſter I ſhall never forget; the remembrance of it rends my heart-ſtrings at this moment; (here ſhe wept bitterly). To ſhorten my ſtory as much as poſſible, I arrived ſafe in *England*; went in a ſtage-coach to *London*, then got into a hackney one, and ordered it to drive to the merchant's houſe where my father died. I knew not one ſingle ſoul in *England*. Do you judge of my ſituation, Sir: The coachman knocked at the door;

a girl opened it; (the ſame, Mr. *Hackit*, which you ſaw with me at *York*). I aſked for Mr. *Wilker*; ſhe replied, ſtaring, Why, Lord, *Mâme*, he is dead, don't you know that? why, he cut his own throat laſt week; I thought every body had heard of it. But, continued ſhe in the ſame breath, I'll call my mam, and ſhe'll ſpeak to you herſelf.—Away ſhe went: I was ready to faint at what I had heard, when a great maſculine woman, with a face as red as fire, and as broad as a warming-pan, advanced, ſaying, Pray, young woman, who do you want? I anſwered, Madam, be charitable enough to ſuffer me to walk into the houſe for a moment, and give me a glaſs of water, when I will (if I ſhould live till then) tell you my buſineſs. She aſſiſted the coachman in getting me into the houſe, where I inſtantly

inſtantly fainted away. On coming to myſelf again, I told the woman who I was; begging to be informed of every circumſtance relative to my father's death. She replied coolly, "Why, really Miſs, I knew very lit-"tle of the Gentleman, he was a per-"fect ſtranger to me; but to be ſure, "the ſuddenneſs of his death frighted "me ſhockingly; for he was talking "to poor dear Mr. *Wilker*; when all "at once he dropped down dead on "on the floor. Aye, it was bad luck "that brought him to our houſe; for "Mr. *Wilker* was ſo hurt at the loſs of "his friend, that he never held up his "head after, poor dear ſoul; and at "laſt made away with himſelf." Here ſhe put her handkerchief to her eyes, to prevent my obſerving that ſhe did *not* cry.

I related to her the ſtory of my life, and then ventured to intreat her to ſuffer me to ſtay in her houſe that night, as I had neither friend or acquaintance in *London*; ſaying, the next day I would go to the *India-Houſe*, as I had been adviſed to do, in order to find out (if poſſible) ſomebody there who had known my deceaſed father, and who might, perhaps, give me ſome information about the effects he (muſt certainly) have left behind him, either in *England*, or at *Madraſs*. Theſe laſt words of mine ſeemed to have ſoftened her features, and ſhe ſaid, Poor young Lady! you ſhall never be at a loſs for a lodging whilſt I have a houſe, for the ſake of my poor dear huſband, who loved your father, Miſs, as if he had been his own natural brother. Your huſband, Madam, ſaid I, are you the widow of Mr. *Wilker?* Yes, that I

am,

am, to my ſorrow, ſhe replied, (again applying her handkerchief to her eyes) for he was, to be ſure, one of the beſt of men. I thanked her for the humanity ſhe had ſhewn me: She nodded, ſaying, Be comforted, child; I am, thank God for it, left very well in the world; and while I have it, you ſhall never want. I fell at her feet on my knees in a tranſport of gratitude; ſhe raiſed me, and calling for a glaſs of wine, inſiſted on my drinking it. She then ordered my baggage to be taken out of the coach, and diſcharged it. I now began to breathe a moment from my ſorrows, for the firſt time ſince I had received the news of my father's death. To be protected by a woman of fortune and reputation; the widow of my father's friend; and to have her houſe for my home, were circumſtances

which afforded me the higheſt ſatiſfaction and pleaſure; and the more ſo, as the fear of finding neither of them in a ſtrange country, had been the objects of my greateſt terror. The houſe was a good one, and well furniſhed; I was put to bed in the beſt apartment, when Mrs. *Wilker* wiſhing me a good night, begged I would compoſe my ſpirits, and rely upon her friendſhip. I did ſo with confidence; becauſe I had no other reliance on earth, and I knew nothing of the world, having paſſed my life (as you know) immured in a convent. The next day at dinner, a well-looking man of about forty was introduced to me, as the brother of Mrs. *Wilker:* This man you knew, Sir, by the name of *Homes*, when he paſſed for my father at *York*. He offered his ſervices to me in the civileſt manner,

ner, ſaying, it would be very improper for ſo pretty a young Lady as I was, to go to the *India-Houſe* among a pack of men; and therefore he would, if I pleaſed, make all poſſible enquiries about Mr. *Homes* and his effects, whenever I would honour him with my commands. I thankfully accepted of his obliging propoſal, and after dinner told him (what probably he was better acquainted with than I) all I knew about myſelf and family. He took the heads of what I ſaid down upon paper, promiſing that he would wait upon the *Eaſt-India* directors the very next morning. I now began to look about me a little; and, confined as my experience of the world had been, yet I could not help remarking that Mrs. *Wilker* had not either the manner or appearance of a Gentlewoman. Her language I could not

then criticize, as I ſpoke very bad *Engliſh* myſelf, and underſtood nothing of its elegancies. I had, indeed, preſerved the little I knew when I left *India*, by converſing ſometimes with my ſiſter; but that cannot be ſuppoſed to have been a great deal, ſince I was not much turned of ſix years old when I left *Madraſs*. Her viſiters too appeared to be of the ſame claſs; but I thought the *Engliſh* women were poſſibly all alike, very ill bred, and aukward. In a few days Mr. *Fletcher* (for ſo the brother of my benefactreſs then called himſelf) informed me, that he had ſeen all the *Eaſt-India* directors, who had with one voice aſſured him, that they knew nothing of Mr. *Homes*'s affairs; which they were much concerned at, as he had defrauded the company of a large ſum of money, which they ſhould be very glad to recover,

ver, if they could by any means find out his executors. On hearing this, (ſaid the man) you may be ſure, Miſs, I took care not to mention you; becauſe I was afraid of bringing you into trouble, as, ſhould they know you to be Mr. *Homes*'s daughter, they would certainly fling you into gaol. My God! cried I, (joining my hands in a ſupplicating poſture, and looking at Mrs. *Wilker*) protect me, my dear Madam, from ſuch a dreadful event. She ſmiling anſwered, Be but a good girl, and follow my directions and advice, and I will take care that they ſhall do you no harm. I promiſed to be all obedience to her will, terrified at the idea of a priſon, without either friend or fortune to aſſiſt me. Alas! Mr. *Hackit*, (ſaid the poor girl) what a ſituation was mine! I now endeavoured by my aſſiduities and attention

tention to pleaſe Mrs. *Wilker*, to repay (as far as I was able) the obligations I owed her. She was continually employed in looking over papers, and in company with men, whom I took to be lawyers, while I worked for her, and ſtudied how to make myſelf uſeful in the houſe. Some months paſſed away in this manner, I ſeldom ſeeing any body, and never going abroad. I had wrote to my ſiſter on my being eſtabliſhed (as I thought ſo well) at Mrs. *Wilker*'s; and ſhe, in return, expreſſed her joy at my being under the protection of ſo worthy a woman (as her humanity to me) beſpoke her to be. One day as I was ſitting alone at work, the girl, whom Mrs. *Wilker* called niece, but who always called her mamma, or mam, came into the room, and among other things, ſaid, Pray, Miſs, are you really the

the daughter of the Gentleman who died here? Yes, my dear, anſwered I, I am. But, replied ſhe, his name was not like yours, for they called him Mr. *Mac Allen*. No, my dear, ſaid I, you muſt be miſtaken, for his name was *Homes*. O! but I am not, cried the girl, for I know very well what I I ſay. The firſt opportunity that offered, I took occaſion to tell Mrs. *Wilker* what her niece had told me. She coloured, and ſeemed confuſed at what ſhe heard; however, recovering herſelf, The girl has loſt her ſenſes, I believe, ſaid ſhe, for I never heard of ſuch a name in my life before, as *Mac Allen*; and then changed the converſation, and made no farther reflections upon this ſubject at that time; but I have frequently ſince. The next day, *Betty* (for that was the girl's name) ſaid to me, "I won't tell you any

"thing

"thing more, Miſs, for you go and "tell it again; I have been finely "ſcolded for what I ſaid to you yeſ-"terday." I begged her pardon, and promiſed to be more diſcreet for the future. Not long after this, Mrs. *Wilker* and I being alone, ſhe began to talk of the obligations I owed her, and of my total dependence on her bounty, expatiating largely on the expence I was to her; and then abruptly aſked me, what I intended to do by way of eſtabliſhing myſelf in life? I ſtarted as from a dream, at this unexpected queſtion, and anſwered, that I was an unhappy orphan, who had no other dependence in the world, excepting on her charity and benevolence. She replied, All that's very well, child, and I will do all in my power for you, if you will do ſomething for yourſelf; but I am not rich,

(con-

(contined ſhe) beſides, I intend ſhortly to return to my own dear country, which is *Ireland*, and I cannot afford to take you along with me; howeve., there is a neighbour of ours, who is worth a plum, he has ſeen you, and is in love with you; if therefore you'll be reaſonable and accept of his offer, you may be made a gentlewoman of at once, and live like a Lady all the reſt of your days. I was aſtoniſhed at this diſcourſe; and the more ſo as I had never yet paid any attention to your ſex, nor had matrimony ever once entered my head. -I replied however, that I ſhould always look upon it as my duty to obey her commands. She ſlapped me on the back, ſaying, I was a very good girl, and ſhould feel the ſweets of my obedience. A few days after this converſation, an ill-made, aukward-looking man, of about

about ſixty, in a large bob-wig, was introduced to me by Mrs. *Wilker:* He advanced with a familiar air, ſaying, "Is this the young woman?" On being anſwered in the affirmative, he ſtared me in the face, and then attempted to ſalute me. I drew back, and own I was ſhocked at the impertinent eaſe of his addreſs. Mrs. *Wilker* ſoon retired. I was petrified with terror at being left alone with this ſavage. He however placed himſelf next me; took my hand; told me I was handſome; aſked how old I might be; and then ſaid, "Look you, child, I want "a girl; and if you are wiſe, you'll "accept of the propoſals I am going "to make you: I will keep you as "fine as a queen, as long as I like "you; and when I do ſo no longer, "I will ſettle fifty pounds a year on "you for your life; and if we have

"any

"any children, I will take care of "them." Enraged at this inſult, I roſe in a fury, called him inſolent monſter; and, in ſpite of his utmoſt efforts to detain me, run out of the room; my heart burſting with ſhame, reſentment, and humiliation. When I ſaw Mrs. *Wilker*, ſhe made many apologies for having expoſed me to ſuch an affront as I had juſt met with; but this ſhe did not do, till from my manner of behaviour to the wretch, ſhe was convinced that her ſcheme would never be brought to bear. Some little time elapſed after this frightful event, without Mrs. *Wilker*'s ever touching on the ſubject; when one evening Mr. *Fletcher* brought to our houſe a young Gentleman to ſupper. He was dreſſed in regimentals; his figure was engaging, and his behaviour polite, and inſinuating to the laſt degree; he paid

me more compliments with his eyes than tongue. I was the more ſtruck with this young man's manner and addreſs, as he appeared to me to be the only creature I had ſeen ſince I came to *England*, who had any reſemblance to thoſe I had known and converſed with in *France*. I therefore found myſelf at eaſe in his company; and thought I underſtood him better than I had done any body for a great while paſt. His ſentiments, and the manner in which he expreſſed them, were ſo analagous to my own, that I felt as if I had been long acquainted with him, and conſequently threw off that reſerve which I had conſtantly worn till that evening, from a conſciouſneſs of being flung out of my ſphere. He ſpoke *French* perfectly well, which added greatly to the pleaſure I had in converſing with him. Mrs. *Wilker* and

and her brother both ſpoke it, but moſt barbarouſly. In ſhort, this Gentleman's viſits grew more and more frequent; till at laſt he ventured to tell me what I had long read in his eyes, *viz.* that he loved me. I received this declaration without any emotion, as I had daily expected it; beſides, though I thought him an agreeable man, and was much prejudiced in favour of his underſtanding and character; yet I was not abſolutely in love with him. I preferred him to all the men I had ever yet ſeen, and could have been contented to have paſſed the reſt of my days with him; but this growing inclination of mine was checked by the apprehenſion leſt *his* views (like thoſe of his *predeceſſor*) might be diſhonourable; and I rather ſuſpected they were ſo, from two circumſtances, which I did not let eſcape my obſer-

vation; the firſt was, that Mr. *Fletcher* one evening called him my Lord; when inſtantly recollecting himſelf, he looked confuſed, and ſaid, "I beg "your pardon, captain; but I have "been all the morning attending the "board of trade, where I ſaid, my "Lord, and your lordſhips ſo often, "that the word is ſtill at my tongue's "end." The Gentleman (I took notice) appeared to be more ſurpriſed at the *apology* than at the *epithet*, which he had received as familiar to him: In the next place, I found he always got out of his own equipage at a diſtance from our houſe, and walked home at night, or went in a hack. I therefore received the declaration of his paſſion with a modeſt reſpect, telling him, that he did me too much honour, if his intention was to make me his wife; and too great an injury, if he thought

of

of me as a miſtreſs. He looked abaſhed, and I thought, hurt, at what I had ſaid. I thus went on: "I am "perſuaded, Sir, both from your man-"ner and appearance, that you would "never come into the city (and that "among low people too) to ſeek a "companion for life. You muſt judge "of me by the ſociety you find me "in; though perhaps, in ſo doing, "you try me by a falſe criterion. "However that may be, I will not "ſuffer you to wound *my* delicacy, "nor expoſe *yourſelf* to a refuſal, by "a declaration, which, however eli-"gible it may appear in your eyes, "would be looked upon as an inſult "done to my honour by me; and "conſequently, be treated with the "utmoſt reſentment and contempt. "I am not, Sir, I know, a proper "wife for you, and I will never be any

" man's miſtreſs." He gazed on me with aſtoniſhment wrote in his face; when reſpectfully taking my hand, he ſaid, Miſs *Homes*, don't be alarmed; your virtue has ſubdued me. I own I have had encouragement to hope a more favourable reception from you, and that on my own terms too; but the candid and ſpirited manner in which you have delivered your ſentiments, though it brings death to my wiſhes, yet raiſes you to a pitch of veneration in my eſteem. How came you to fall into ſuch bad hands? ſaid he, (preſſing me to his boſom) I diſengaged myſelf from him, and anſwered, " No matter; better be in " *theirs* than in *yours*, Sir: They are " much leſs dangerous." My angel, cried he, accept of my ſervices; truſt me, and I will reſcue you from theſe vile people. Whilſt he ſpoke his eyes

flaſhed

flaſhed fire; I eaſily conceived the neceſſity there was of refuſing his offers; I therefore ſteadily reſiſted all his importunities to ſerve me, and he left me in deſpair, exclaiming, Why, why, am I married! On his departure Mrs. *Wilker* came into the parlour (where I was ſtill ſitting) her face illuminated with rage; when ſeating herſelf on a chair, almoſt breathleſs with paſſion; Pretty ſort of behaviour this, cried ſhe, why, what do you think of, child? *Two* ſuch fine offers as I have procured for you, and accept of *neither* of them! but you may ſtarve and beg for me: I'll keep you no longer, that's flat. I burſt into tears, and intreated her to have pity on me, aſſuring her, that I would do every thing but diſhonour myſelf to oblige her. Well then, ſaid ſhe, (compoſing her features a little) keep to your word, and I will

try to get you a man in your own way, I mean a huſband. But mark me, Miſs, if you don't follow my directions circumſtantially for the future, I will, I vow to God, either ſell you to ſome old bawd, or tranſport you to *America*. Frighted to death at her looks as well as menaces, I promiſed every thing, and ſhe grew cool, ſaying, I will think of a ſcheme to get ho-no-ra-bly rid of you, drawling out the word honourably with a ſneer. I had now long ſeen through the character of this woman, and her bother, as ſhe called him: I ſhuddered at the view of the deplorable ſituation I was in, but I had no reſource. I often invoked on my knees, the ſpirit of my father to my aid; and called inceſſantly on my mother's name, but alas, in vain. I begged of my obdurate tyrant to get me a place; aſſuring her,

I would

I would moſt chearfully work for my bread, rather than be a burthen to her. She always anſwered me, that if I offered to leave he, ſhe would have me arreſted for my board and lodging, and then I ſhould ſee who would bail me for ſo large a ſum of money. Thus entangled as well as intimidated, I gave myſelf entirely up to her directions. In a ſhort time ſhe planned the ſcheme of my going into *Yorkſhire* with her brother, there to paſs for a rich heireſs. You know the reſt, Sir; only, that all the untruths which I told you, were forced from me by the moſt dreadful threats; and *Fletcher* (leſt I ſhould not act the part well which he had dictated to me) conſtantly placed himſelf ſo as to hear our converſation, whenever you and I were left alone, or I would (I think) have undeceived you; but my heart was a traitor, Mr.

Hackit;

Hackit: It feared to loſe you, and therefore conſpired with *Fletcher* in the deceit. When we arrived at *Ivy Caſtle*, I would have diſcovered all to you; but I dreaded the violence of temper which I perceived in your parents. Now, believe me, Mr. *Hackit*, (though I really loved you) yet before we went to *Scotland*, I intreated *Fletcher* to ſuffer me to break off the match; alleging the horror I felt on being obliged to impoſe upon you. He laughed at my falſe delicacy (as he called it) and bid me, at my peril, betray him; ſaying, "Sir *Jaſper* "*Hackit* and his wife are a couple of "avaricious, ill-tempered, rich old "toads, and therefore very proper to "be made dupes of: Their ſon (I am "told) is a worthy oppreſſed charac-"ter, and if he has one ſpark of "humanity in his compoſition, will

" love and pity you, when he knows " your hiſtory, which I make no doubt " but you'll be ready enough to tell " him when your tongue is ſet at " liberty." Here ſhe ended her ſtory, when the poor creature flung herſelf at her huſband's feet, imploring his compaſſion and forgiveneſs. She is very handſome it ſeems. He was moved at her tears, and raiſing her from the ground, ſaid, You have ruined us both, *Jenny*; however, I am glad to find that you are virtuous, and a gentlewoman; time, and my diligent enquiries, may perhaps, recover ſome part of your fortune: At preſent you are my wife, and as ſuch I ſhall never be brought to treat you ill, let my parents act as they pleaſe. Here he embraced her. After ſome conſultation upon what was beſt to be done in their preſent circumſtances, it

was

was determined, that ſhe ſhould ſtay in the town where they where, whilſt he returned to *Ivy Caſtle*, to tell his ſtory. He therefore took a decent lodging for her, and ſet out for his father's, in order to relate what had paſſed between him and his Lady; the narration of which (you may ſuppoſe, *Julia*) flung the whole family into the moſt violent conſternation. Lady *Hackit* inſiſted that her ſon ſhould be inſtantly divorced from the low-lifed beggarly drab (as ſhe called Mrs. *Hackit*), and afterwards have her taken up and puniſhed as a vagrant and impoſtor; and in the mean while, commanded her ſon, on his duty, to leave her to ſtarve; declaring, that if he ever attempted either to ſee her, or aſſiſt her any more, he ſhould be diſinherited. Sir *Jaſper* thought it more prudent not to turn the girl entirely off,

off, till they were perfectly convinced that the recovery of her father's fortune was a thing impoſſible; obſerving, that ſhould ſhe regain it after ſhe was divorced from *Joe*, he would never be the better for it, and they would have reaſon to repent of his having acted too raſhly in the affair. Mr. *Hackit* (though bred up in ſentiments as illiberal as theſe) yet *now*, for the firſt time in his life, perceived they were ſo. He loved his wife, whoſe ſtory had moved him to the utmoſt compaſſion for her unparalleled miſfortunes; he therefore liſtened to his parents with an abhorrence of their cruelty and want of principles; and then declared, in a determined tone, that he would never abandon his wife for having committed errors which were abſolutely compulſive on her part; adding, that ſhe well born, well bred,

bred, handſome, and virtuous, and would one day (he was perſuaded) be, what in their eſtimation was above all worth, *rich*: "And till that time ar-
"rives, I muſt endeavour to keep the
"poor girl as well as I can; for which
"reaſon, Sir, I now beg of you to
"let me manage the eſtate my grand-
"father left to me by his will, with
"orders that I ſhould be put into poſ-
"ſeſſion of it as ſoon as I had attained
"the age of one-and-twenty. I am
"now, Sir, turned of twenty-five, and
"have never received one ſixpence of
"it, though I was credibly informed
"by a Gentleman of the law, whom
"I met with at *York* races, that the
"income of the eſtate is clear five
"hundred pounds a year; I muſt
"therefore requeſt that you would in-
"ſtantly deliver up the title-deeds of
"this eſtate, together with an account

"of

"of all the money you have received "from it, ever ſince my grandfather's "death, which is now ten years ago, "and which was from that time, to be "put out to intereſt for my uſe, till "I became of age, and that I have "been, you know, for upwards of "four years, though you have not yet "thought proper to give up your truſt "to its right owner." Sir *Jaſper* was thunderſtruck at this unexpected ſpeech of his ſon's, as he had hitherto flattered himſelf with the hopes of ſecreting that part of his father-in-law's will from Mr. *Hackit*, in order to have enjoyed the revenue of it during his life; and alſo, by that means, to have kept his ſon in conſtant dependence on him; but now the truth was diſcovered, he ſoftened his tone, ſaying, My dear *Joey*, you have been miſinformed in this affair; but however, ſince you

ſeem

ſeem determined to live with the girl, I will allow you two hundred pounds a year at preſent; and according as you behave for the future to myſelf and your mother, I may, perhaps, in time do more for you. I am much obliged to your generoſity (replied the young man) but I chooſe to manage my own eſtate; and therefore, after having examined my grandfather's will, I ſhall ſend a lawyer to ſpeak to you, and ſettle matters according to juſtice and equity between you and I, Sir. So ſaying, he left his father to prepare his accounts againſt they were called for.

This, my dear, was the ſituation of affairs at *Ivy Caſtle*, when I arrived at Mr. *Lewis*'s; and it was from Mr. *Hackit*'s own mouth that I took down the particulars which I here ſend you; he was ſo obliging as to dictate whilſt I wrote,

I wrote, ſometimes by his memory, but oftener from a paper wrote in ſhort-hand.

I commended his honour and humanity in ſupporting the cauſe of his wife; and ſaid every thing I could think of, which might tend to extenuate her faults, or to the aggrandizing her merits. There is great room for apologies in her conduct, indeed, ſaid I, Mr. *Hackit*; and I think ſhe has ſhewn an uncommon ſhare of fortitude, as well as of virtue, not to have fallen a prey to vice, ſituated ſo critically as ſhe has been for a length of time, and young as ſhe was too; but I am perſuaded her heart is a noble one, and only wants to be placed in its own vortex, where it may move ſpontaneouſly, to be admired and reverenced. Mr. *Hackit* ſmiled, and ſeemed pleaſed at the favourable opinion which

I had conceived of his Lady, and politely anſwered, If ever ſhe has the honour and advantage of being acquainted with you, Lady *Lucy*, ſhe may poſſibly (by copying ſome of your virtues) become both a valuable, as well as an amiable woman. I replied, If that's all ſhe wants towards perfection, I promiſe you I ſhall at all times be extremely glad of her acquaintance, and will render both you and her every ſervice in my power, whenever you can make me of any uſe to you. He thanked me with a warmth of gratitude which was pleaſing; and then told me, that he ſhould return to his wife the next day. This converſation paſſed between him and I at *Lewis Farm*, where he ſpent a day with me; and indeed, it required no leſs time to tranſcribe this long hiſtory. Adieu, my dear, I have wrote volumes.

How

How good I am! do *you* follow *my* example, and tell me about *Louiſa*. I tremble for the fate of that ſweet girl; 'tis a painful ſenſation to me to doubt her prudence, I want to be relieved of it. You are certainly the moſt worthy, as well as the moſt amiable girl I ever knew, *Julia*; how does your tender care of Mrs. *Boothby* and her family, excite the admiration and eſteem of your ever affectionate and faithful friend,

Groſvenor Square. L. Scott.

P. S. I have been at home ſome time, and have ſuffered much uneaſineſs from your long ſilence, but I would not interrupt the *Hackit* ſtory to tell you ſo; beſides, I really am ſo tired with writing, that my pen drops from my fingers.

Miſs BOLTON *to Lady* LUCY SCOTT.

YOU are, indeed, very good, my dear *Lucy*, to fatigue yourſelf with writing volumes for my amuſement. The hiſtory of *Jenny Homes* is intereſting and affecting in the higheſt degree. I am convinced in my own mind, that Mrs. *Wilker* and her brother have robbed her of Mr. *Homes*'s effects, and perhaps murdered him for that purpoſe; if ſo, I truſt their villainy will one day be brought to light. God forgive me if I judge too hardly of them.

What unfeeling hearts muſt Sir *Jaſper* and his Lady have! I admire Mr. *Hackit*'s ſpirit and humanity, and dare ſay he has good principles; in which there is the more merit, as his education, and the example he has con-

conſtantly had before his eyes were certainly not calculated to incite him to the practice of any one virtue; but, on the contrary, were capable of perverting a diſpoſition which otherwiſe might have been naturally good. I rejoice to find that he has the means of ſupporting himſelf and wife, independent of his parents; and I heartily wiſh them happy.

Mr. *Boothby* has received a letter from his daughter, accompanied by one from Sir *Francis Merton*. *Louiſa* begs the permiſſion of flinging herſelf at her parents feet, together with her huſband, there to implore their bleſſing and forgiveneſs. Sir *Francis* intreats the ſame favour in behalf of his children; and aſſures Mr. *Boothby*, that his daughter will be able to juſtify her conduct, if he will but condeſcend to give her a hearing; adding, that

as ſoon as he ſhall hear of the young couple's having been favourably received at *Farnaby Abbey*, he propoſes to himſelf the honour of paying a viſit to Mr. *Boothby*, in order to ſettle every thing properly (and he hopes) to his ſatisfaction, with regard to his daughter-in-law's jointure, *&c.* and concludes with the ſtrongeſt aſſurances of his perfect approbation of his ſon's choice in a wife; together with ſome handſome compliments on the pleaſure it gives him, to be allied to a family ſo truly eſtimable as that of my guardian's; and is his moſt humble ſervant. Theſe letters were anſwered immediately, ſignifying, that they would moſt willingly receive the bride and bridegroom; and ſhould eſteem Sir *Francis*'s intended viſit as a peculiar honour conferred on them. You may be ſure, *Lucy*, that the know-

knowledge of Sir *Francis*'s approbation of this marriage gave no ſmall ſatisfaction to the parents of my friend *Louiſa*: I know it gave infinite pleaſure to me. It is certainly a great match for her in point of fortune; but that would have been no conſideration, when balanced againſt the rigid probity of her father; who I I really believe of the two, would rather have ſeen her the wife of an honeſt beggar, than married to the firſt man in the kingdom, againſt the conſent of his relations and friends. We are in hourly expectation of ſeeing this happy pair; pleaſure glows in our breaſts on this joyful occaſion. I will not cloſe my letter till after their arrival.

Well, my dear, they came yeſterday about five in the afternoon, in an elegant poſt-chaiſe and four, with two footmen on horſeback, all in new

liveries. Mr. *Merton* handed his *Louiſa* out of the chaiſe; we met them in the yard; they advanced to Mr. *Boothby*, when both bending their knees, aſked his bleſſing. He embraced them alternately, with tears of tenderneſs ſtreaming from his eyes. Then the mother hung enraptured over her children (as ſhe called them). At laſt *Louiſa* flew round my neck; I ſtrained her to my boſom. My heart really leaped with joy at ſeeing her ſo perfectly happy. She preſented her huſband to me, who told me, that next to his *Louiſa*, I was the woman on earth for whom he had conceived the higheſt eſteem. "The character "which your friend has ſo frequently "drawn of you, Madam, commanded "my admiration; but 'tis too much "to find the form as perfect as the "mind." I bowed, and ſmiled at his com-

compliment. We then all entered the houſe and drank tea, which contributed a little to the compoſing of our ſpirits. As ſoon as it was over, and the ſervants had left the room, *Louiſa*, with a look of ineffable ſweetneſs, begged ſhe might be permitted to clear up that part of her conduct, which (ſhe much feared) wanted an explanation. "You may remember, my dear "Miſs *Bolton*, (addreſſing herſelf to "me) that I received a letter from "Mr. *Merton*, the contents of which "I never communicated to you. You "did not tell me that you knew I had "received ſuch a letter; but your eyes "ſpoke the truth. I was infinitely "pained at the being under a neceſſity "of uſing reſerve to the friend of my "heart; but the idol of that heart, "ſaid ſhe (looking at her huſband) "deſired I would do ſo, and I durſt

"not

"not diſobey him. He wrote me in "his letter, that he had brought his "father to conſent to our union, on "condition that he renounced the er-"rors of the church of *Rome*, and "entered into the communion of the "church of *England*." A propoſal, ſaid Mr. *Merton*, interrupting his wife, which I moſt readily acquieſced in, as I had, ever ſince I left the convent, been determined to abjure a religion which had authorized, and even commanded, ſo baſe a piece of deceit as that, which had been for years put upon my father and ſelf. Here he ceaſed ſpeaking, but Mrs. *Merton* begged he would go on, ſaying, he would certainly narrate thoſe circumſtances which had paſſed preceding their marriage, better than ſhe could, as he was himſelf the principal actor in all the ſcenes which he had to relate.

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He bowed, and continued thus: I told my father, that my reſolution was fixed as to the quitting the religion of my mother, whether I ever married my miſtreſs or not. Well, ſaid my father, but my dear ſon, this affair muſt be managed with the utmoſt delicacy; your mother has long deceived *us*, we will now practiſe a little of her own art upon *her*; for, obſerve me, ſhould ſhe penetrate our ſcheme, ſhe will do all in her power to fruſtrate it; becauſe, after all the pains and hypocriſy which it has coſt her to make a good catholic of you, judge what will be her rage and diſappointment, when ſhe finds that you purpoſe marrying a proteſtant, and, which is worſe, becoming one yourſelf. I know Mr. *Boothby*'s character well, (continued my father) and conſequently honour it; a child of his muſt probably, be

truly amiable; and as to the affair of fortune, I am not anxious about it. Her father is that ſort of man, who will, I know, give his daughter as much money after her marriage, as he would have done before it; and I will make the girl a jointure fit for your wife, though ſhe ſhould not bring you a ſhilling, *Frank*. But, my dear boy, (continued he) you muſt prevail upon your miſtreſs to run away with you; becauſe it is neceſſary that I ſhould appear ignorant of the affair, in order to keep peace with your mother, and old *Boothby*, I know, has ſo delicate a ſenſe of his honour, that he will never give his child leave to marry you without my conſent. "Therefore take "my advice, write to your *Louiſa*; "tell her to hold herſelf in readineſs "one day next week, and that you "will come down to the village with my "ſiſter,

" ſiſter, Lady *Ludlow*, there to remain " *incog.* till ſhe can find a proper oppor- " tunity of ſlipping away unobſerved " from her father's houſe; when your " aunt and ſelf will immediately con- " vey her to *Scotland:* There you muſt " inſtantly marry her. The young " Lady (if ſhe loves you, *Frank*) can " have no objection to this ſcheme, as " I have treated her delicacy with a " parental attention, by engaging my " Lady *Ludlow* to accompany her in " the expedition." But I will write a few lines to Miſs *Boothby* myſelf, (continued he) " leſt, as you ſay ſhe " is extremely prudent, ſhe may ap- " prehend that you promiſe more than " you can perform." Here Mr. *Mer- ton* ſmiling, ſaid, Now, my dear, do you tell the reſt, for you have my fa- ther's letter. It contained, ſaid *Louiſa*, but a few words, which were, to aſſure me,

me, how joyfully he ſhould receive me into his family, and how careful and tender of me his ſiſter Lady *Ludlow* would be; and concluded with inſiſting on my communicating this ſcheme to no one living, as I valued my own happineſs and his eſteem. Here Mrs. *Merton* (looking at her father) ſaid, Thus ſituated, how could I act otherwiſe than I have done? Do then, my dear Sir and Madam, pronounce my pardon. They both folded her in their arms, pouring a million of prayers and bleſſings on her head; telling her at the ſame time, that they could no longer condemn her conduct, ſince ſhe had explained her motives for it. She then came to me, and taking my hand, But here, ſays ſhe, I know not how to hope for forgiveneſs; and yet I ſhall be wretched if it is refuſed me by my *Julia*. Indeed, my dear Madam,

I re-

I replied (ſmiling) I think you would have wanted both ſentiment and honour, if you had betrayed either your lover or his father; therefore I rather admire than blame your ſecreting the affair from me. "You could not re-"veal it with honour, my dear; and "I was convinced you could not, from "your not communicating it to me." Generous *Julia*, (cried ſhe) how your noble heart judges of others from itſelf! Here I changed the topic of converſation.

I muſt now tell you, *Lucy*, that Mr. *Merton* has (fortunately) a manly figure, otherwiſe the extreme ſoftneſs of his voice and manner would give him an inſupportable effeminacy. He is well made, tall, and genteel; his features are large and regularly handſome; his addreſs is (from its gentleneſs) irreſiſtably inſinuating and engaging;

gaging; his foreign education has given him that ſort of attentive politeneſs ſo truly pleaſing in the *French*, and which our *Engliſh* beaux in general know ſo little of, or at leaſt, ſo ſeldom reduce to practice. He doats on his wife to an exceſs which I will not attempt to deſcribe. His fondneſs of her is viſible in every word, look, and geſture; yet does he behave to her with a reſpect which approaches nearer to adoration than any thing elſe which I can compare it to. No fooliſh careſſes or indelicate familiarities paſs between them in company; their eyes only ſpeak the feelings of their hearts. The old folks are charmed with their ſon-in-law. *Louiſa* is ten times handſomer than ever ſhe was; owing, I ſuppoſe, to her being ten times happier. We expect Sir *Francis* and Lady *Ludlow* here to-morrow. And now, my dear,

dear, ſuffer me to lay down my pen; after having wiſhed you ſucceſs (which indeed I ought to have done before) in your plan of going to *Hopton-Hall*. I can neither approve or condemn the ſcheme; it is one of thoſe ſort of ſituations which muſt be left to the chapter of accidents, as it will certainly be either praiſed or blamed, according to the ſucceſs it meets with. I am not much an admirer of theſe ſort of dubious undertakings; but I believe a good deal may be ſaid on both ſides of the queſtion; ſo that every thing may turn out according to your deſires, is the ardent wiſh of the heart of your ever faithful friend,

Farnaby Abbey. J. BOLTON.

Lady LUCY SCOTT *to Miſs* BOLTON.

HOW I rejoice, my dear *Julia*, at the happineſs of your friends! I am half in love with Mr. *Merton*, and pretty near as much ſo with old Sir *Francis*. *Louiſa* too, has proved her conduct to have been unavoidable, as affairs were ſituated. Long, long, may ſhe and her worthy mate be happy in each other.

I muſt not yet loſe ſight of the *Hackit* family. The day after I had ſeen Mr. *Hackit* at *Lewis Farm*, I went to pay a viſit at *Ivy Caſtle*. What a different ſcene there preſented itſelf to my view, from that which your laſt letter repreſented to my imagination. I found my Lady *Hackit* wrapped up in her night-cap, devoured by her own ill humour (and its conſtant compa-

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nion) the vapours. She burſt into tears at the ſight of me, and clapping her hands on her face (as if aſhamed to ſhew it) cried out, Ah! Lady *Lucy*, what a wretched parent do you now ſee before you! I anſwered, I hope not, Madam; for I have heard Mr. *Hackit*'s ſtory from himſelf, and I really think there is a great probability that things may turn out very well for him in the end. Is that your opinion? ſaid her ladyſhip, do you really think that *Joey* will ever be able to come at her father's fortune? I replied, indeed, I think it is highly probable that time and proper enquiries will bring the affair to light; and as to the young Lady herſelf, by what I have heard of her ſtory, I judge her to have a worthy good heart; and therefore ſhe is much more to be pitied than blamed throughout her whole

hiſtory. I am ſure I know few girls who would have acted as prudently, and with the courage ſhe has done, circumſtanced as ſhe has been. Let me tell your ladyſhip, that it is very uncommon for a perſon of her age and ſex to have lived among vice, without catching the infection; but ſhe was well born and well educated (added I) and thoſe two advantages were doubtleſs her guards. "For my part, I "have conceived ſo good an opinion "of her, that I long to be one of her "acquaintance, and ſhall take the very "firſt opportunity that offers of pro-"curing myſelf that pleaſure." Will you keep her company indeed? (ſaid Lady *Hackit*) what, though ſhe ſhould prove a beggar, Lady *Lucy?* The ſooner for that reaſon, (anſwered I) ſince in that caſe I may perhaps, have it in my power to render her ſome

ſervice;

ſervice; whereas, if ſhe was rich and happy, all the world would court her, and I ſhould be of no uſe to her. You are extremely generous, ſaid Lady *Hackit* (with a certain toſs up of her noſe) but, for my part, I ſhall ſuſpend my judgement of the young woman, till I hear how matters turn out at the *India Houſe*, where my ſon intends going on his return to *London*. Here Sir *Jaſper* joined us; he talked a good deal on the ſubject, and in pretty much the ſame ſtile as his Lady. I ſaid every thing I could invent in favour of the young couple; and I really flatter myſelf, that I did ſoften their obdurate hearts a *little*, before I left them. I know nothing more of this family ſince I left the farm, but when I do, you ſhall hear it all. My parting with the *Lewis*'s was tender; but how ſhall I deſcribe poor *Suſan*'s ſorrow when I

took leave of her? I reaſoned with her, and ſhewed the neceſſity there was for her ſtaying ſome time longer where ſhe was; repreſenting to her, how happily ſhe was ſituated there, with friends who treated her more like their own child, than my ſervant. She acknowledged the truth of all I ſaid, declaring, that ſhe would prefer death to the ſeeing of Lord *Tatton* again; owned herſelf perfectly ſenſible of the *Lewiſes* goodneſs to her; but at the ſame time proteſted, that ſhe could not ſurvive the parting with her dear miſtreſs. I comforted her, by promiſing, that as ſoon as my brother was married, ſhe ſhould return to me. She aſked (with vivacity) will my Lord be married ſoon, Madam? Do you wiſh he ſhould, *Suſan?* ſaid I (looking archly at her). Yes, indeed I do, ſhe replied, (with truth viſible in her eyes)

" for

" for then I ſhall ſee your ladyſhip " again." I was vaſtly pleaſed to obſerve that her attachment to me was become ſtronger than her love for my brother. I now kiſſed the faithful good creature; and after putting twenty guineas into her hand, I bid her lock herſelf up in her own room, and take a good cry, that ſhe might not ſee me drive off.

I left the *Lewiſes* with regret; they are moſt amiable people. On my arrival in town, I found my parents and brother truly rejoiced to ſee me. I have been ſo taken up with Mrs. *Hackit*'s ſtory, *Julia*, that I have not found time to ſpeak a word of my own concerns. My brother is (as the common phraſe has it) over head and ears in love with *Jenny* (as he calls her); he is almoſt conſtantly at Lord *Plumſtead*'s. Tho' they are ſtill in the coun-

try, about twenty miles from town, yet he viſits them as regularly as if they lived the next door too us. On their return to *London* (which will be ſoon) all parties are to have a meeting, I hear, when matters, I apprehend, will eaſily be brought to a concluſion, as the match is a very ſuitable one on all ſides, and the families have long had a reciprocal eſteem for each other. Lady *Kelſo* has wrote a very polite friendly letter to my mother, telling her, that ſhe is convinced her ſon's life depends upon his being united to me; and at the ſame time pathetically intreats her to conſent to our innocent ſcheme of bringing Lord *Kelſo*, not only to approve of the match, but even to propoſe it himſelf to his ſon. She ſays a vaſt deal more to perſuade my mother of the certainty of ſucceeding in her plan; concluding, that

at

at all events Lord *Kelſo* muſt be brought to give his conſent to our marriage, or be the death of his only child.

My mother has promiſed to break the affair to my father at a proper time, but I could not prevail on her to do ſo, till ſhe found that my happineſs depended almoſt as much upon the ſucceſs of Lady *Kelſo*'s ſcheme, as Lord *Malcom*'s did. She told me, that ſhe could not approve of any deceit being made uſe of on an occaſion which ſhe thought wounded my delicacy; as ſhe apprehended there was no neceſſity for diſguiſe, in order to procure for *her* daughter the huſband of *her* choice, let him be who he would. However, continued ſhe, "ſince it muſt be ſo, *Lucy*, I will "mention it to your father; but I "much fear he will never agree to "your

" your going on a viſit to *Hopton Hall* " under a borrowed name." I aſſured this good mother of mine, that I would not take a ſingle ſtep in this affair, without her advice and approbation. She thanked me, and ſaid, ſhe would do all in her power to contribute to my happineſs.

My brother paid me a viſit this morning, when ſeating himſelf, he ſaid, My dear *Lucy*, I am come to receive your orders with regard to that poor girl *Suſan*. You know I begged to be called upon whenever my purſe ſhould be wanted. Your *generoſity*, my ſweet ſiſter, muſt not ſupplant my *juſtice:* I therefore inſiſt upon your telling me what money you gave her at *Lewis Farm*; (for I am ſure you did not leave her with empty pockets) that I may repay you with thanks: And as I am (I hope) going to be married, I purpoſe

purpoſe ſettling upon *Suſan* fifty pounds a year for her life, if you think that is enough, if not, I will add whatever you pleaſe to it. But (continued he) I want this penſion to appear as coming from you, *Lucy*, leſt the ill-natured world ſhould gueſs at the motive of my munificence; therefore I will make it over to you for her uſe; won't that do better, ſiſter? I flung my arms round his neck, and kiſſed his handſome *face*, becauſe I was at that moment violently in love with his *heart*. You are an amiable good lad, cried I; and for that reaſon you ſhall have all the ſatisfaction there is in doing good, to yourſelf: "I left twenty guineas "with *Suſan*; and the ſum you pro-"poſe ſettling upon her is ſufficient; "more would fling her out of her "ſphere, and conſequently make her "either ridiculous or miſerable." He

ſeemed

ſeemed pleaſed with the approbation I had ſhewn of his conduct, but ſighing, ſaid, Alas! it will never be in my power to repair the injury I have done that unfortunate poor girl. Really, *Julia*, if all men were like my brother, they would be delightful creatures; but it is quite otherwiſe: Moſt of the pretty gentlemen who "litter public places," (as Mrs. Clive ſays) have bad heads, and no hearts. However, they find their likeneſſes among us women, and ſo between them propagate puppies and flirts in abundance. God keep you and I, my friend, from ſuch connexions; and with this pious prayer I ſhall conclude my ſtupid letter. Yours for ever,

Groſvenor Square. L. Scott.

P. S. Lady *Jane Carr* ſpends the day with me to-morrow; how will

ſhe rejoice at the felicity of her beloved *Louiſa!* What a real pleaſure I ſhall have in communicating it?

Miſs BOLTON *to Lady* LUCY SCOTT.

SIR *Francis Merton* and Lady *Ludlow* have been with us this week paſt; they both appeared charmed with *Louiſa*, and indeed, with all her family. The former told Mrs. *Boothby*, that he had heard ſo excellent a character of her daughter, both from the nuns in whoſe convent ſhe had ſpent ſo many years of her life, as well as from Lady *Plumſtead*; (not to mention the rapturous praiſes which his ſon continually poured forth on the mental, as well as perſonal charms of his miſtreſs), that he had determined their union, even before they left *Paris*.

"But

" But I wiſhed to gain time, as *Frank* " was but young, and knew little or " nothing of the world. I was more " particularly induced to favour his " inclinations, as I knew the Lady's " family were all Proteſtants, and I " dreaded Lady *Merton*'s propoſing a " wife of the Romiſh perſuaſion for " her ſon." Theſe conſiderations (continued Sir *Francis*) obliged me to precipitate matters on my return to *England*, as I found my wife and her friends were plotting to form an alliance for the boy, which might fix him in (what they call) the true religion. Theſe reaſons will, I hope, Mr. *Boothby*, (ſaid the good old Gentleman) plead my apology for aſſiſting my *ſon* in ſtealing away your *daughter*. We will, I promiſe you, make all the reparation in our power, both to you and the Lady, by uſing our utmoſt endeavours

endeavours to make her future life happy. Mr. *Boothby* aſſured Sir *Francis* of his perfect approbation of all that had paſſed; declaring his ſatisfaction at ſeeing his daughter married into ſo worthy a family as that of Mr. *Merton*'s. Lady *Ludlow* proteſted ſhe would have gone to the end of the world with the young couple, rather than the match ſhould have broke off, and her nephew, perhaps, by that means, been married to a Papiſt. Mr. *Merton* told his aunt, that the very firſt thing he propoſed doing on his return to *London*, was to wait on the Archbiſhop of *Canterbury*, in order to be perfectly inſtructed in the tenets of the *Anglican* faith; after which he would make a public abjuration of the errors in which he had been educated. We all approved his deſign; his father and aunt ſhed tears of joy on the occaſion.

I was

I was glad to hear his reſolution, becauſe difference of opinions in religious matters between married people, I am told, often breeds diſſenſions; otherwiſe, I own to you, my dear *Lucy*, that I think with Mr. *Pope*, who ſays,

" For modes of faith let graceleſs zealots fight,
" His can't be wrong, whoſe life is in the right.

Sir *Francis* propoſes in the ſpring, that Mr. *Merton* and his Lady ſhould make one more trip to *Paris*; for, ſaid he, my ſon may finiſh his education there, though a married man, without any impropriety, as the *French* people learn to ride, fence and dance at all ages: Beſides, (added he ſmiling) Lady *Merton* will have time to cool upon her anger during our abſence; for I ſhall beg leave (with their permiſſion) to be one of the party, and

ſo

ſo will that fair Lady, I hope, ſaid he (looking at me.) "*Louiſa* will "want a young companion of her "own ſex; and I read in her eyes, that "Miſs *Bolton* is the friend of her "choice." If my dear *Julia* will conſent to your obliging propoſal, Sir, (ſaid Mrs. *Merton*) I ſhall then be the happieſt creature on earth. Say rather, Madam, I anſwered, if my guardian will conſent: On my part, I can only aſſure you, that I ſhall moſt willingly accept of Sir *Francis*'s offer, if it meets with Mr. and Mrs. *Boothby*'s approbation. Sweet girl, (cried my guardian) how good you are; it is almoſt impoſſible to deny you any thing. You would not ſurely, (ſaid Sir *Francis*) refuſe the young couple the firſt favour they have aſked of you ſince their marriage. Here Mr. and Mrs. *Merton* joined their father in ſoliciting Mr.

Boothby to ſay yes. He did ſo at laſt, but very reluctantly I could perceive; and I knew why—Obſerve, my dear, that Lady *Ludlow* is to be our *chaperon*.

Shall I, O fortune! ſhall I ſee my *Harry* again, and that without controul? Yes, *Lucy*, my heart tells me that I ſhall; at leaſt I ſhall be upon the ſame continent with him, and there is ſome ſatisfaction even in that thought. *Louiſa* and her huſband are to ſtay here for a ſhort time I find, till Sir *Francis* can prevail on his Lady to ſee them, which it ſeems ſhe abſolutely refuſes doing at preſent. The lawyers are buſy in drawing the marriage ſettlements; Mr. *Boothby* gives his daughter ten thouſand pounds. Sir *Francis* appeared ſurpriſed when he heard the ſum mentioned, as he had not imagined ſhe would have brought his ſon above half ſo much. He however

ever ſhewed no ſort of pleaſure at this diſcovery, only ſaying, It is the young Lady's affair, not mine; for if ſhe had brought ten times as much fortune into my family, it ſhould have been every farthing ſettled on her and her children, as I think *Frank* is ſufficiently rich in the poſſeſſion of ſo lovely a woman. He has made *Louiſa* a jointure of one thouſand pounds *per annum.*

George Boothby, I find, is not to make his appearance among us till Sir *Francis* is gone, as he cannot forget (he ſays) that his indiſcreet raſhneſs had very near robbed him of his only child. Young *Merton* on the contrary, ſhews an impatience of being acquainted with him, to which he is moſt certainly not incited by his *Louiſa*; who, if I can read her heart, don't love her brother *George:* My *Harry* ſhe has always doated upon. Indeed

George has ever behaved to her more like a tyrant than a brother.

What a beautiful picture have you given me of Lord *Tatton*'s heart! happy Lady *Jane*, who is the poſſeſſor of it. Worth like his is a baſis on which ſhe may ſafely build her future felicity. Thus all my friends ſail on with a proſperous gale to the port of matrimony, whilſt I alone am ſecluded from being of the party. Be it ſo: I am become by that means the heroine among you; for there never was one, without her combating numberleſs difficulties, and going through immenſe trials. I am ſorry that ſuch was my lot; but ſince it is ſo, I have made a reſolution to equal, if not excel, all my fair predeceſſors in conſtancy, perſeverance, and fidelity to my knight.

Louiſa

Louiſa has wrote to her brother *Harry*, to inform him of her marriage; as ſhe juſtly obſerves, that ſhe has nobody's leave to aſk but her huſband's now; and why ſhould he refuſe her? The good girl has appointed him to meet her at *Paris*, without mentioning a word of my being to accompany her thither. She has cautioned him however, not to inform his father of her having wrote to him; but I fear, *Lucy*, that Mr. *Boothby* and *George* will lay their heads together, and defeat all our pupoſes, though for different reaſons: I am ſure *George* either is, or pretends to be in love with me. I have had a letter from him under the pretext of enquiring after his ſiſter and her huſband. His words ſay nothing, 'tis true; but they imply a great deal to me, who have already read the language of his eyes.

I gave it to his father, deſiring him to anſwer it.

Mr. *Merton* often makes me laugh when we women are all at work, to ſee him ſteal a needle ſlily, and follow our example, with an addreſs and dexterity which would be ſurpriſing to thoſe who were not acquainted with his hiſtory. He ſays he finds a great reſource in work, as it is impoſſible to read all day long on a rainy day in the country; and the want of ſomething to do, he obſerves, makes many of his ſex tired of themſelves, and conſequently croſs to all around them. I believe he's right; for I have often pitied the men to ſee them yawning and loitering whole days away for want of ſome employment; I wiſh therefore, that thoſe who won't read, might be obliged to make their own ſhirts, *&c.* Sir *Francis* leaves us to-

morrow;

morrow; we are all to go to town ſhortly, as we hope Lady *Merton* will at laſt be placable. Lady *Ludlow* accompanies her brother. She is a well-bred, ſenſible, good-tempered woman, who has ſeen a great deal of life; and having loſt a good huſband in her youth, has wiſely remained a widow ever ſince.

Tell me how your ſcheme goes on. I cannot help laughing to think how aukwardly *you* will anſwer to the name of Miſs, who have been a ladyſhip from your birth, though leſs ſo, I fancy, than moſt people in your ſtation of life; for I have often heard you chide us girls at ſchool, for giving you your title (as you thought) too frequently; and I have obſerved that your ſervants have had the ſame leſſon, ſince they oftener ſay Madam than my Lady. For my part, I have

always taken the liberty of ſtiling you my dear *Lucy*; and as you probably will not change your chriſtian, with your family name, I ſhall ſtill continue to ſubſcribe my dear *Lucy*'s ever obliged and affectionate friend,

Farnaby Abbey. JULIA BOLTON.

Lady LUCY SCOTT *to Miſs* BOLTON.

MY dear *Julia*, I am delighted to hear that you are to accompany your friend to *Paris*, where I ardently wiſh you may meet your *Harry*.

I am to ſet out for *Hopton Hall* to-morrow. This ſudden flight will naturally ſurpriſe you; but mark how it happened: I told you in my laſt, that Lady *Jane Carr* was coming to ſpend the day with us; ſhe did ſo, accompanied by Lady *Plumſtead*. In the courſe of our converſation the latter obſerved,

obſerved, that it was a bad time of the year to travel in; yet ſhe and her daughter were going to ſpend a few weeks at my Lord *Kelſo*'s, whilſt Lord *Plumſtead* went on to the North of *Scotland*, where buſineſs of importance called him. I looked at my mother, when, to my inexpreſſible ſurpriſe ſhe ſaid to Lady *Jane*, If your mamma, my dear, had no objection, ſhould you like to take *Lucy* with you there by way of a companion? *Jenny*, you may be ſure, expreſſed her joy at the propoſal in the moſt lively manner, and Lady *Plumſtead* appeared delighted to ſee her daughter made ſo happy, and thanked my mother in the warmeſt terms for conferring ſuch a favour on them. Lady *Longſdown*, after we had drank tea, propoſed a game of piquet to Lady *Plumſtead*, for which purpoſe they two retired into a little drawing-room,

room, and left us alone. I obſerved my mother winked at me as ſhe went away, as much as to ſay, communicate your ſcheme to the daughter, whilſt I break it to the mother. They were no ſooner gone than I did ſo. The giddy girl enjoyed the frolic (as ſhe called it) but, ſays ſhe, I tremble leſt through inadvertency I ſhould betray you. I told her ſhe would have time enough on the road to practice my name. Here our mothers had finiſhed their party, and came into the room again. Mine ſaid, My dear *Lucy*, I have made Lady *Plumſtead* acquainted with your romantic ſcheme, and ſhe approves it for the ſame reaſon I do—becauſe we ſee, that at all events you are determined to marry Lord *Malcom*. "I have ſounded your fa-
"ther upon the ſubject, (though ſo
"cautiouſly as to prevent his ſuſpect-
"ing

" ing my reaſon for ſo doing), and
" find he has no good objections to
" the alliance, though he is not fond
" of the family. However, I durſt
" not communicate your plan to him,
" as I knew he never would conſent to
" it; therefore your beſt way will be
" to aſk his leave to accompany Lady
" *Jane* into *Scotland*, without ſaying
" where you are going, how long you
" ſhall ſtay, or, in ſhort, any thing of
" the matter. It ſhall be my care to
" give Lady *Kelſo* notice of your in-
" tention, as well (added ſhe, ſmiling)
" as to inform her of your name. Your
" father, who looks upon Lady *Jane*
" as already one of his own children,
" will, I am ſure, refuſe her nothing,
" ſo ſhe muſt aſk you of him." I
need not tell you that *Jenny* accepted
this offer moſt willingly. At ſupper
ſhe made her requeſt. My father (who

is exceſſively fond of her) took her in his arms, and kiſſing her cheek, anſwered, My ſweet girl, if *Lucy* joins her intreaties to yours, I can never reſiſt your united powers, though I don't know how to part with either of you, ſaid he, looking affectionately at us both. My brother ſeemed to envy his father the careſſes which he received from his *Jane*, and laughing ſaid, You uſe me cruelly now, but my turn will come, *Jenny*, and then I will be revenged of you. She good naturedly gave him her hand, ſaying archly, I love you in your father, my Lord. "And did you kiſs me in him too, "Lady *Jane?*" Not abſolutely (ſhe replied) but ſomething like it. He caught her round the neck as ſhe pronounced theſe words. She called me to her aid, and I flew to her aſſiſtance. Lord *Tatton* don't like parties with his

his miſtreſs; but as the marriage ſettlements will take a conſiderable time in drawing, our journey will not impede the marriage, which is to be conſummated as ſoon as the lawyers will finiſh their buſineſs.

Julia, my heart beats pit-a-pat, leſt I ſhould not ſucceed with this old *Scotch* peer. Well, I can but do my beſt, you know, and leave the reſt to fate. My name is to be *Neville*; it was my mother's. Direct my letters under cover, to Lady *Longſdown*, in *Groſvenor-Square*, and ſhe will take care and ſend them to me. I hope, my dear, you and I ſhall now ſoon meet in town; till when, and for ever after, continue to love your own

Groſvenor-Square. L. SCOTT.

P. S. Love and joy to the amiable *Louiſa*, and her worthy mate. My com-

compliments of felicitation on the happy occaſion to Mr. and Mrs. *Boothby*. Take care of *George*, my dear; I am afraid of him on your account. I have heard more of the *Hackits*, but have not now time to tell it you; ſo adieu.

Miſs BOLTON *to Lady* LUCY SCOTT.

MAY all ſucceſs attend my lovely Lady *Lucy*. To pleaſe is your talent as well as your purſuit; how then ſhould you fail? Sir *Francis* is gone, *George* is arrived. The meeting between Mr. *Merton* and him was frank, cordial, and ſincere on one ſide, reſerved and cold on the other. *Louiſa* I ſaw, remarked the contraſt with reſentment and grief; her looks ſpoke her diſlike of her brother's behaviour. I believe he is not pleaſed to find that his father

father has parted with ſo much money to his ſiſter; for if I am not greatly miſtaken in the young man, avarice is his predominant paſſion. Thank you my dear, for the caution you give me againſt him. I believe indeed, he will try to gain me by fair means firſt; if they don't do, he may perhaps uſe foul ones: I am however upon my guard againſt his machinations. He met me in the garden the other morning, when ſeizing my unwilling hand, he ſaid, Lovely *Julia*, you look like the goddeſs of health; yet inſtead of diſtributing that firſt of all bleſſings to your votaries, as ſhe does; you, on the contrary, deprive them of it. Am I ſo miſchievous, replied I; if ſo, I am ſure it is unintentionally; but pray who have I ever deprived of health? Can you aſk that, ſaid he, while you ſee me languiſhing under a diſeaſe of

which you are the ſole cauſe, and which one ſmile from that enchanting mouth of yours would inſtantly diſpel? Good God! ſaid I, Mr. *Boothby*, you are quite in heroics to-day; for what have my ſmiles to do with your health? My life depends upon them, Madam, he replied, flinging himſelf at my feet. You aſtoniſh me, *George*, cried I; are you ignorant that my faith and heart are engaged to your brother; and that if they were not ſo, your father would never conſent to your becoming my huſband? I know all you can tell me, anſwered he; and I know alſo, that I love you to diſtraction, and can no longer conceal a paſſion which deſtroys me. "I have ever loved you, Miſs "*Bolton*, from my infancy; but ſee-"ing that you viſibly preferred my "brother to me, I endeavoured to "conquer my inclinations; but, alas! "how

" how vain were all my efforts to re-
" call a heart which had ſo long been
" in your poſſeſſion. In ſhort, Ma-
" dam, *Harry* is unfaithful; I can
" prove this aſſertion to a demonſtra-
" tion, whenever you pleaſe to liſten
" to me. And as to my father, he will
" never be able to reſiſt our united in-
" treaties; do you only join me in the
" requeſt, my angel, and I'll anſwer
" for its ſucceſs." I puſhed him from
" me, with diſdain, ſaying, " Go,
" thou unworthy ſon of ſuch a father!
" know, Mr. *Boothby*, that his diſin-
" tereſted mind will never be brought
" to think his ſon *George* a proper
" match for *Julia Bolton*. And as to
" what you have ſaid of your brother,
" Sir, 'tis falſe; falſe as your own
" heart." Here I aſſured him, that
if for the future he ſhould ever pre-
ſume to perſecute me with his im-

pertinent addreſſes, I would inſtantly complain to Mr. *Boothby* of his inſolence; ſo ſaying, I left him. Now I ſhould be very ſorry, my dear *Lucy*, to give his father pain by diſcovering *George*'s pretenſions to him; nor could I pardon myſelf for making him quarrel with his ſon on my account, if I could poſſibly avoid it. My ſpirits are very low, my friend; I have a weight about my heart to-day, which is not uſual to me, and which I tremble leſt I ſhould infect you with; for which reaſon I'll talk no more of myſelf, but fill up the reſt of my letter with the pretty nun's ſtory, which *Louiſa* narrated to us all laſt night after ſupper. You muſt recollect the young melancholy nun, who was frequently mentioned by Miſs *Boothby*.

She was the daughter and only child of a merchant, who was ſuppoſed to be

be in good circumſtances; her parents died when ſhe was only five years old, and left her to the guardianſhip of another merchant, a friend of her deceaſed father's. He placed her in the convent, where Mrs. *Merton* knew her: There ſhe ſtaid ten years; at the expiration of which time, her guardian waited upon her one day, when he told her, that as her late father had left her little or no fortune, he came to conſult with her about the moſt eligible manner of diſpoſing of the ſmall ſum of money which he had of hers in his hands, as well as of her perſon; becauſe ſhe was now arrived at a period of life when ſhe ought to form ſome plan of getting her bread. She ſtarted at the laſt words, having hitherto ſuppoſed herſelf to be a rich heireſs. This ſhe told him. He ſaid, he was very ſorry that the falſe reports which had

been circulated about the country (with regard to the ſtate of her affairs) ſhould have led her into ſuch an error; but that the fact was much otherwiſe, ſince he had only two hundred pounds remaining in his hands of what her father had died poſſeſſed of, the reſt having been expended in her board, clothes, and education. He obſerved however, that ſmall as the ſum was, yet it was ſufficient to procure her admittance as a nun, into the houſe where ſhe had already lived for ten years; adding, that in his opinion ſhe could not adopt a more rational, as well as prudent ſtep than that would be, of taking the veil. She cried bitterly while ſhe liſtened to this diſcourſe, having no vocation for the habit, as ſhe had for ſome time conceived a paſſion for a young man of the town, who was brother to one of the boarders

in

in the houſe, with whom ſhe had contracted a particular friendſhip. She told the merchant, when grief (with which ſhe was almoſt ſuffocated) would permit her to ſpeak, that ſhe deſired time to think of what he had propoſed, and then retired from the grate. On entering her chamber, ſhe became almoſt frantic with diſappointment, grief and ſurpriſe, when ſhe recollected the ſcene which had juſt paſſed between her guardian and herſelf. She was not without ſuſpicion that he had wronged her; but where was the reſource? Unacquainted as ſhe was with the world, and without *one* friend to apply to; for as to the nuns, ſhe was certain they would rather join in the cheat, than aid her to detect it; as they were always glad to increaſe their flock, let the means of doing ſo be what they would. In this diſtracted ſituation of

mind the poor girl applied to the ſiſter of her lover, begging that ſhe would requeſt her brother to make all poſſible enquiries in the town where her father had lived and died, about his circumſtances, and what he was ſuppoſed (by his neighbours) to have poſſeſſed at the time of his deceaſe. This deſire was moſt readily complied with by the parties, who were themſelves greatly intereſted in the affair. Some time after this the young man waited upon his miſtreſs, and with the moſt ſorrowful countenance acquainted her (whom he moſt ardently loved) that all the information he could gain (after having taken all poſſible pains to be informed on the ſubject) was, that her father was ſuppoſed to have died rich, (for that part of the world) but that they believed nobody knew ſo much of his affairs as the young Lady's guardian,

guardian, and one other gentleman, whoſe name they had forgot, and who, they believed, was now dead. The young man lamented in the moſt pathetic language, his want of power to ſhare his fortune with her; but ſaid, he was ſo unfortunate as to have an obdurate miſer of a father, who would never conſent to his marriage, even to an angel, unleſs ſhe brought a fortune into the family. The lovers wept inceſſantly the ſeverity of their fate; whilſt the nuns on their part, uſed every perſuaſion and artifice in their power, to engage her to become one of the ſiſterhood. There was indeed, no alternative left her; for where could ſhe go? what could ſhe do? Without a protectreſs in the world, young, handſome, and poor, ſhe was the natural prey of calumny and vice. She therefore began ſeriouſly to think of

taking the veil; but unconquerable love oppoſed for ſome time, her utmoſt endeavours for that purpoſe. To put it at once out of her power of ever being united to the man her heart doated on, was an effort above her ſtrength. The violent conflicts ſhe ſuffered in her mind, ſoon impaired her health. She ſaw with pleaſure (as ſhe thought) her diſſolution approach by ſlow, but ſure degrees, when ſhe was ſeized with a violent fever and delirium which alarmed all the nuns, who received little hopes (from the phyſicians who attended her) of her recovery. She continued in a ſtate of imminent danger for ſome days, when the diſtemper took a favourable turn, and at laſt reſtored this unhappy creature to life, and wretchedneſs again. Weakened as ſhe was by her late diſorder, her paſſion had diminiſhed with her

her ſtrength; from whence ſhe vainly flattered herſelf that ſhe loved with leſs ardour than ſhe had done before her illneſs. This obſervation encouraged her to promiſe the nuns, that ſhe would enter into her year of probation or noviciate, as ſoon as ſhe was well enough to attend the offices of the church. She did ſo; and with a heart oppreſſed with the moſt poignant ſorrow, ſhe went through the ceremony of taking the white veil, but not without ſhewing the moſt lively marks of an ineffable grief. During all this time her lover was not eaſier than herſelf; but his ſiſter finding there was no hopes of ever ſeeing them united, prudently forbore mentioning her brother to her friend; and ſhe, poor creature, had not courage to enquire after the man, who, but too fatally, employed moſt of her thoughts.

Thus

Thus the year went on, at the end of which ſhe was to pronounce thoſe vows which her heart abjured; ſhe therefore begged a longer time of probation, alleging, that ſhe was not *yet* in a frame of mind which could render her an acceptable ſacrifice to God. But as ſhe continually prayed for a vocation, ſhe humbly hoped to obtain it ſhortly from divine goodneſs. More time was (with much difficulty) granted her, which when expired ſhe was told, ſhe muſt either profeſs, or be turned out of the convent. At this dreadful ſentence ſhe ſummoned up all her fortitude, and declared herſelf ready for the ſacrifice. It was performed with the uſual ſolemnities; the wretched victim was led more dead than alive to the altar, where ſhe publicly renounced with her *tongue*, what her *heart* was tremblingly full of. The

ceremony

ceremony over, her ſiſters put her to bed, ſhe being no longer able to ſupport the complicated evils of a broken heart and a tottering frame. The next day however, ſhe drew courage from her deſpair, and felt a relief in finding herſelf irrevocably doomed to miſery; the die was thrown, and ſuſpenſe was at an end. She now determined to perform all the duties of her ſtation with the moſt rigid punctuality, hoping that conſtant occupation, together with ſome degree of enthuſiaſm (if ſhe ſhould be able to attain it) would at laſt reconcile her to the rigour of her fate. In this pious reſolution ſhe continued ſome days, when one morning ſhe was called to the parlour; ſhe there found an old Gentleman, who ſaid, "My dear Miſs, I was an inti-
"mate friend of your late father's,
"and have now been abſent from this

" part of the world for ſome years, " upon account of a law-ſuit which " was tried at *Toloufe.*" He then expreſſed his ſurpriſe at ſeeing her in a religious habit, ſaying, My dear child, what could induce you, who had ſo genteel a fortune, to make a nun of yourſelf? Alas! Sir, replied the poor girl, you are, I find, deceived as much as I have been. No, no, I had no fortune, my father left me none; and that circumſtance alone has induced me to renounce a world which I had no means of living in with honour. My God! (cried the Gentleman) who could have told you ſuch a falſity? I myſelf am one of the truſtees to your father's will, and know for a certainty, that he left you ſix thouſand pounds at his death, which muſt be much increaſed ſince that time. This money was to be paid you at the age of eighteen,

eighteen, or on the day of your marriage; and in caſe of your death before either of thoſe periods, the money was to be your guardian's. She heard no more, but fainted off her chair, and was carried to bed by ſome nuns whom the Gentleman rung for, on ſeeing her fall on the other ſide of the grate, where it was impoſſible for him to give her any aſſiſtance. I leave you to imagine what were her reflexions on the return of her ſenſes. Two or three days ſooner had this man made his appearance, ſhe might have been as happy as ſhe was now wretched. She implored divine vengeance on the head of her inhuman guardian, then lamented and condemned her too great precipitation in taking the veil; and in ſhort, was half diſtracted with love, rage, remorſe, and deſpair. Theſe paſſions were too violent to laſt; ſhe therefore

after

after ſome time fell into a kind of ſtupid melancholy, from which nothing had been found capable of rouſing her, till a young nun who had profeſſed ſome months before her, called her attention by her unwearied aſſiduities to comfort and relieve her diſtreſs. She had herſelf a tender heart, and was therefore touched at the ſympathiſing tears which her friend often ſhed over her misfortunes. Soothed by her gentle manners and affectionate attendance on her, ſhe at laſt unlocked her heart to receive the ſweet balm of friendſhip. The ſtories of theſe two girls were alike; both abhorred the convent, and ſighed for thoſe pleaſures, which, as they were ſtrangers to them, they ſuppoſed were exquiſite. The world they pictured to themſelves as a theatre on which all the actors were happy, becauſe they enjoyed love and liberty.

This

This ſimilitude of taſte and judgement gave birth to a reciprocal friendſhip between them, which was followed by a mutual confidence in each other, in which they found ſome alleviation to their ſorrows; when one day St. *Agnes* (for that was the name of our fair ſufferer's friend) told her, that ſhe had agreed with a young officer, who had long been her lover, to make her eſcape with him; and ſhe now intreated her friend to accompany her, promiſing to put her into the hands of her lover, whoſe father, ſhe informed her, was lately dead, immenſely rich; aſſuring her, that the young man would receive her with rapture, and fly to *Holland* immediately with all his treaſure, where they would have nothing to fear from the purſuit of the prieſts. This ſhe told her ſhe had heard from the Gentleman's own mouth; adding,

And now, my dear, every thing will be ready for our flight at the beginning of next week, when the old wall of the convent (you know) is to be pulled down; it is propped at preſent in ſuch a manner, that it would be no difficult matter for either you or I to puſh it down towards the garden; and for fear any one ſhould do ſo, they are going to repair it. However, we will walk off firſt; but we muſt, I believe, be forced to play the hypocrite for the firſt day or two of the breach, as we are the youngeſt nuns, or we ſhall perhaps be too cloſely watched upon the occaſion. Let us therefore never approach the wall, nor look at the people, who will enter by hundreds, in order to ſee the interior part of a nunnery; but affect to ſhudder at the indecency and impropriety of a convent's being laid open to the world in

ſuch

ſuch a ſhocking manner. The day after this converſation had paſſed between them, St. *Agnes* gave her friend a letter from her lover, which confirmed all ſhe had advanced the day before in his favour; this determined our heroine to follow her friend. Her ſpirits now began to exhilerate, and ſhe, with difficulty concealed from the penetrating eyes of her ſiſter-nuns, the effect which the proſpect of abandoning them and their houſe for ever, had upon her joyous mind. The important time now approached; the hearts of our fair adventurers beat high with expectation of love and liberty; when on the morning of that day which they had fixed on for eſcaping through the garden, as ſoon as it grew duſky, and that the nuns were retired to their cells; on that very day, St. *Agnes* being ſitting at work among all her ſiſters in the

commun, fell off her chair in a fit, occaſioned (as is ſuppoſed) from the too violent agitation which her ſpirits had undergone for ſome days before. They cut her lace, threw water in her face, ſent for a ſurgeon to bleed her; and in ſhort, uſed every poſſible means to recover her, but in vain; her ſoul had taken its flight, and ſhe never ſhewed any ſigns of life from the moment ſhe fell. I ſhall not attempt to deſcribe what were the feelings of her friend, whilſt ſhe contemplated the features of her now departed St. *Agnes*. Her ſenſes fled at the ſight. She was conveyed to her chamber, where two nuns who conſtantly watched her, were not ſufficient to hold her; to ſuch a degree was her frenzy grown in a few hours. A piece of paper which had fallen out of St. *Agnes*'s boſom, when they unlaced her, let them into the whole contrivance

trivance and deſigns of theſe unhappy girls. It was a letter from the officer, ſettling all the preliminaries prior to their intended elopement. All danger was now over from that quarter, as one of the Ladies was dead, and the other raving mad; in which ſtate this unfortunate creature continued for near ſix years, at which period of time ſhe regained her ſenſes, but never either her health or ſpirits. My hand aches with writing ſo violently that I have hardly power to ſubſcribe myſelf, my dear Lady *Lucy*, ever yours,

Farnaby Abbey. J. BOLTON.

End of VOL. II.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM